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WESLEY'S VETERANS

LIVES OF
EARLY METHODIST PREACHERS
TOLD BY THEMSELVES

VOL. III

JOHN NELSON
THOMAS LEE
JOHN PRICKARD

With Additions and Annotations

BY REV. JOHN TELFORD, B.A.

London

CHARLES H. KELLY

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AN EXTRACT

OF

JOHN NELSON'S JOURNAL:

BEING an Account of God's dealing with his soul from his youth to the forty-second year of his age, and His working by him; likewise the oppressions he met with from People of different denominations. Written by Himself.

Printed by E. FARLEY & Co., Small Street, Bristol.
1767.

NELSON'S PREFACE.

THE following sheets were written at divers times, for my own satisfaction. But about seventeen years ago, when I was in the Newcastle Round, I transcribed them into a book. Some of our friends saw them, and begged they might be printed; which I refused at that time, knowing my own ignorance and inability.

However, Mr. Thornton the lawyer heard of it, and desired me to let him see it; when he thought, as 'The Case' had been already published, and had been a means of stirring up many to hear the word, this might be of use to comfort some that were in trouble, and advised me to put it to the press.

I declined it for the present; but Mr. Thornton showed them to several friends at Leeds, who were of the same opinion, and pressed upon me to print it immediately, which I with much reluctance agreed to: and I pray that God may make it a blessing to all that read it; and if any receive benefit therefrom, the Lord shall have the glory; for to Him alone it doth belong.

What is wrong may the Lord pardon! and that no one may be hurt by me, or anything I have written or preached, is the sincere prayer of their unworthy servant,

For Christ's sake,

JOHN NELSON.

[*Birstall*, 1767.]

WESLEY'S VETERANS

Vol. III

JOHN NELSON[1]

'John Nelson had as high a spirit, and as brave a heart, as ever Englishman was blessed with.'

—Southey, *Life of Wesley.*

I, John Nelson, was born in the parish of Birstall, in the West Riding of the county of York, in October, 1707, and brought up a mason, as was my father before me.

When I was between nine and ten years old, I was horribly terrified with the thoughts of death and judgement, whenever I was alone. One Sunday night, as I sat on the ground by the side of my father's chair, when he was reading the twentieth chapter of the Revelation, the word came with such light and power to my soul that it made me tremble, as if a dart were shot at my heart. I fell with my face on the floor, and wept till the place was as wet where I lay as if water had been poured thereon. As my father proceeded, I thought I saw everything he read about, though my eyes were shut ; and the sight was so terrible,

[1] The titlepage and preface to the first edition are given on the opposite page. Several years before (1744 or 1745) Nelson had written a short account of his imprisonment, and it is this to which he refers as 'The Case' in the preface.

I was about to stop my ears that I might not hear, but I durst not: as soon as I put my fingers in my ears, I pulled them back again. When he came to the eleventh verse, the words made me cringe, and my flesh seemed to creep on my bones while he read, 'And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat thereon, from whose face the heavens and the earth fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things that were written in the books, according to their works.' Oh what a scene was opened to my mind! It was as if I had seen the Lord Jesus Christ sitting on His throne, with the twelve Apostles below Him, and a large book open at His left hand; and, as it were, a bar fixed about ten paces from the throne, to which the children of Adam came up; and every one, as he approached, opened his breast, as quick as a man could open the bosom of his shirt. On one leaf of the book was written the character of the children of God; and on the other, the character of those that should not enter into the kingdom of heaven. I thought neither the Lord nor the Apostles said anything; but every soul, as he came up to the bar, compared his conscience with the book, and went away to his own place, either singing or else crying and howling. Those that went to the right hand were but like the stream of a small brook, but the others were like the flowing of a mighty river.

God had followed me with convictions ever since I was ten years old; and whenever I had committed any known sin, either against God or man, I used to be so terrified afterwards that I shed many tears in private; yet, when I came to my companions, I wiped my face, and went on again in sin and folly. But, oh, the hell I found in my mind when I came to be alone again; and what resolutions I made! Nevertheless, when temptations came, my resolutions were as a thread of tow that had touched the fire.

When I was about sixteen, I heard a sermon in our own church, which deprived me of rest in the night; nor durst I sin as I had done before for many days. But, alas! I looked the wrong way; for I watched those that were older and more learned than myself; and what they did, I thought I might safely do: so I turned back to sin and folly. Oh what evil do the old and learned do to those who are young and unlearned! When their lives are corrupt, they are certainly the most accursed beings on the earth. How many times has their example hardened my heart, and encouraged me in the broad way! Surely they are a curse to their own children and servants, as well as to their ignorant and unlearned neighbours.

When I was turned a little of sixteen, my father was taken ill, which I thought was for my wickedness: yet at that time, vile as I was, I prayed earnestly that God would spare him for the sake of my mother and the young children, and let me die in his stead; but the Lord would

not regard my prayer. Three days before he died, he said to my mother, 'Trouble not thyself for me; for I know that my peace is made with God, and He will provide for thee and the children.' I was greatly surprised at his words, wondering how he could know his peace was made with God.

In one of my times of trouble I was in a stable, and, falling into a slumber, I dreamed I prayed that God would make me happy. But I thought, 'What will make me happy?' I also dreamed that I beheld Jeremiah the prophet standing on a large rock, at the west gate of Jerusalem. His countenance was grave, and with great authority he reproved the elders and magistrates of the city; for which they were enraged, and, pulling him down, cast him on a dunghill where the butchers poured forth the blood of their slain beasts: and I imagined I saw them tread him under their feet; but his countenance never changed, neither did he cease to cry out, 'Thus saith the Lord, If ye will not repent and give glory to My name, I will bring destruction on you and your city.' He seemed so composed and so happy while he lay on the dunghill, and while they were treading him under their feet, that I said in my dream, 'O God! make me like Jeremiah!' and, though it was but a dream, it left as great an impression on me as if I had seen it with my eyes. And since then Thou, Lord, hast, in a small measure, given me to taste of his cup.

When I was about nineteen, I found myself in great danger of falling into scandalous sins; and I prayed, I believe, twenty times that God would

preserve me, and give me a wife, that I might live with her to His glory. He heard my prayer, and delivered me out of many dangerous temptations ; for which I praise His holy name.

The first time I ever saw my wife was at Tonge, where I was going to build the new church. I did not know who she was, nor where she came from ; but, at first sight, I said in my mind, ' That is the woman I asked of God in prayer ' ; and I fully determined, if I got married, I would live to His glory. But what are resolutions when made in our own strength ! For, though I believe God gave me the most suitable wife that I could have had, in every respect, yet for some years after we were married I did not live to His glory, for I loved pleasure more than God : yet many times when I had been shooting a whole day, and had got the creatures I pursued, I was quite unhappy, and ready to break my gun in pieces, resolving never to shoot or hunt any more. At last I said to my wife, ' I am determined to leave off this course of life ; yet it is impossible, if I stay here : therefore, if thou art free, I will go to Sir Rowland Wynn's, and see if I can get business there ; if not, I will go somewhere else, at a distance from home.' To this she gladly consented.

On Monday morning we parted in great love, praying one for the other. As I went from our town, I made use of Jacob's words, which he spake to the Lord as he went to Padan-aram ; and the Lord blessed me in all my journey. I found work at Newark-on-Trent, and stayed about a month.

All that time the hand of God was upon me, by convicting me of my former sins; so that the sense of His wrath being justly kindled against me, made me cry to Him for mercy, often forty times in the day. Then I went to London, and got into business the day I arrived there. Here my concern for salvation increased for some time, and I continued to read and pray when I had done my work, refusing all company; and I believe, if I had had some one to show me the way, I should have closed in with the Lord in a saving manner. But I looked at men for example, and fell from my seriousness. The workmen cursed and abused me, because I would not drink with them, and spend my money as they did. I bore many insults from them, without opening my mouth to speak to them again. But when they took my tools from me, and said if I did not drink with them I should not work while they were drinking, that provoked me, so that I fought with several of them; then they let me alone. But that stifled my concern for salvation, and I left off prayer and reading in a great measure. I stayed better than half a year, and had not one hour's sickness, nor did I want one day's work all that time; so that by my hand-labour I cleared, besides maintaining myself, twelve pounds fifteen shillings.

When I came home, I fell into my former course. I said to my wife, 'I cannot live here.' So I set off for London again, ordering her to follow me in the wagon. We both got well there, and lived in a good way, as the world calls it; that is, in peace and plenty, and love to each other.

After some time, I had a sore fit of illness : then my conscience was alarmed, and I expected to die, and perish body and soul in hell. Oh the distress I was in ! not through fear of death, so much as of the judgement that should follow. But the Lord rebuked the fever, and restored me to perfect health.

After residing some years in London, my wife had not her health ; therefore we agreed that she should take our two children and go into the country, and I would follow at a certain season ; which accordingly I did.[1] But I could not rest night or day. I said, 'I must go to London again.' Several asked me why I would go again, since I might live at home as well as anywhere in the world. My answer was, 'I have something to learn that I have not yet learned' ; but I did not know that it was the great lesson of love to God and man. When I got there, I fell to work presently, and all things prospered that I pursued. I then began to consider what I wanted to make me happy ; for I was yet as a man in a barren wilderness, that could find no way out. I said to myself, 'What can I desire that I have not ? I enjoy as good health as any man can do ; I have as agreeable a wife as I can wish for ; I am clothed as well as I can desire ; I have, at present, more gold and silver than I have need of ; yet still I keep wandering from one part of

[1] It is said that when Nelson sought work at Harewood Hall he was asked if he could make a pig-trough, and, when supplied with a block of stone, he carved on it a sow feeding her litter. The work at once won him employment.

the kingdom to another, seeking rest, and cannot find it.' Then I cried out, 'Oh that I had been a cow, or a sheep!' for I looked back to see how I had spent above thirty years; and thought, rather than live thirty years more so, I would choose strangling. But when I considered that, after such a troublesome life, I must give an account before God of the deeds done in the body, who knew all my thoughts, words, and actions, I cried out, 'Oh that I had never been born!' for I feared my day of grace was over, because I had made so many resolutions and broken them all. Yet I thought I would set out once more; for I said, 'Surely God never made man to be such a riddle to himself, and to leave him so; there must be something in religion, that I am unacquainted with, to satisfy the empty mind of man; or he is in a worse state than the beasts that perish.' In all these troubles I had none to open my mind to; so I wandered up and down in the fields when I had done my work, meditating what course to take to save my soul.

I went from church to church, but found no ease. One minister at St. Paul's preached about man doing his duty to God and his neighbour, and when such came to lie upon a death-bed, what joy they would find in their own breast by looking back on their well-spent life. But that sermon had like to have destroyed my soul; for I looked back, and could not see one day in all my life wherein I had not left undone something which I ought to have done, and wherein I had not done many things wrong: and I was so far from

having a well-spent life to reflect upon that I saw if one day well spent would save my soul, I must be damned for ever. Oh what a stab was that sermon to my wounded soul! It made me wish my mother's womb had been my grave. After that, I heard another sermon, wherein the preacher summed up all the Christian duties; but he said, 'Man, since the fall, could not perfectly fulfil the will of his Maker; but God required him to do all he could, and Christ would make out the rest; but if man did not do all he could, he must unavoidably perish; for he had no right to expect any interest in the merits of Christ if he had not fulfilled his part, and done all that lay in his power.' Then, I thought, 'not only I, but every soul must be damned'; for I did not believe that any who had lived to years of maturity had done all they could, and avoided all the evil they might. Therefore I concluded that none could be saved but little children. Oh what deadly physic was that sort of doctrine to my poor sin-sick soul!

I thought I would try others, and went to hear Dissenters of divers denominations; but to no purpose. I went to the Roman Catholics, but was soon surfeited with their way of worship. Then I went to the Quakers, and prayed that God would not suffer the blind to go out of the way, but join me to the people that worshipped Him in spirit and in truth; I cared not what they were called, nor what I suffered upon earth, so that my soul might be saved at last. I believe I heard them every Sunday for three months:

what made me continue so long was the expectation of some help by hearing them ; for there was one, almost at my first going, that spoke something that nearly suited the state my soul was in ; but he showed no remedy. I had now tried all but the Jews, and I thought it was to no purpose to go to them ; so I thought I would go to church, and read and pray, whether I perish or not. But I was amazed, when I came to join in the Morning Prayer, to see that I had mocked my Maker all my days by praying for things I did not expect or desire ; then I thought none could be so ignorant as I had been, nor so base, to draw near to God with their lips while their hearts were so far from Him.

In the spring Mr. Whitefield came into Moorfields,[1] and I went to hear him. He was to me as a man who could play well on an instrument ; for his preaching was pleasant to me, and I loved the man ; so that if any one offered to disturb him, I was ready to fight for him. But I did not understand him, though I might hear him twenty times for aught I know. Yet I got some hope of mercy, so that I was encouraged to pray on, and spend my leisure hours in reading the Scriptures. Sometimes, as I was reading, I thought, ' If what I read is true, and if none are Christians but such as St. John and St. Paul describe to be God's people, I do not know any person that is a Christian either in town or country.' I said, ' If things be so, I am no more

[1] Sunday, April 29, 1739. ' Preached. . . . to an exceeding great multitude.'

a Christian than the devil'; and my hope of ever being one was very small. In this struggle I had but little sleep: if I slept four hours out of twenty-four I thought it a great deal. Sometimes I started, as if I was falling into some horrible place. At other times I dreamed that I was fighting with Satan; and when I awoke I was sweating, and as fatigued as if I had really been fighting. Yet all this time I was as capable of working, both in understanding and strength, as ever I was in my life; and this was an encouragement to me. In all this time I did not open my mind to any person, either by word or letter; but I was like a wandering bird, cast out of the nest, till Mr. John Wesley came to preach his first sermon in Moorfields.[1] Oh that was a blessed morning to my soul! As soon as he got upon the stand, he stroked back his hair, and turned his face towards where I stood, and I thought fixed his eyes upon me. His countenance struck such an awful dread upon me, before I heard him speak, that it made my heart beat like the pendulum of a clock; and, when he did speak, I thought his whole discourse was aimed at me. When he had done, I said, 'This man can tell the secrets of my heart: he hath not left me there; for he hath showed the remedy, even the blood of Jesus.' Then was my soul filled with consolation, through hope that God for Christ's sake would save me; neither did I doubt in such

[1] On Sunday, June 17, 1739. Nelson was at this time working on the French Church in Spitalfields. Wesley's diary entry is: '6.45, Moorfields, 7,000. Isa. lv.'

a manner any more, till within twenty-four hours of the time when the Lord wrote a pardon on my heart. Though it was a little after Midsummer that I heard him, and it was three weeks after Michaelmas before I found the true peace of God, yet I continued to hear as often as I could, without neglecting my work. I had many flashes of love under the word, when I was at private prayer, and at the table of the Lord; but they were short, and often some sore temptations followed.

Now all my acquaintance set upon me, to persuade me not to go too far in religion, lest it should unfit me for my business, and so bring poverty and distress on my family; they said, 'We wish you had never heard Mr. Wesley, for we are afraid it will be the ruin of you.' I told them, 'I had reason to bless God that ever he was born, for by hearing him I was made sensible that my business in this world is to get well out of it; and as for my trade, health, wisdom, and all things in this world, they are no blessings to me, any farther than as so many instruments to help me, by the grace of God, to work out my salvation.' Then they said they were very sorry for me, and should be glad to knock Mr. Wesley's brains out; for he would be the ruin of many families if he were allowed to live, and go on as he did. Some of them said they would not hear him preach for fifty pounds. But I told them I had reason to bless God that ever I heard him, and I intended to hear him as often as I could, for I believed him to be God's messenger; and if I

did not seek to be born again, and experience a spiritual birth, I could not enter into the kingdom of heaven, which was the doctrine he preached.

A little after Michaelmas, I had many trials again, and passion got advantage over me: then I thought it was to no purpose for me to strive any longer; for every one endeavoured to provoke me, and I could not bear it. About this time, I was going out of the Park into Westminster, where was a soldier with his arms about him, as he was coming from guard, who began to talk to some other soldiers and a company of Welsh women. I was but a few paces from him: the tenor of his discourse was as follows: 'You know what manner of man I was some months ago, and none of you pitied me then, though I was going headlong to the devil; for I was a drunkard and a swearer, I was a whoremonger and a fighter, a Sabbath-breaker and a gamester; nay, I know no sin but I was guilty of it, either in word or deed; so that it is a miracle that my neck was not brought to the gallows, and my soul sent to hell long ago. At that time I durst not think of death; for I had no reason to think of aught but hell. I was therefore desperate in wickedness, and did not put a restraint on any lust or appetite; till one day, as I was coming out of the country by Kennington Common, Mr. John Wesley was going to preach,[1] and I thought I would hear what he had to say; for I had heard many learned and wise men say he was beside himself. But when he began to speak, his words made me

[1] Wesley preached at Kennington on September 2, 9, 16, and 23.

tremble. I thought he spoke to no one but me, and I durst not look up; for I imagined all the people were looking at me. I was ashamed to show my face, expecting God would make me a public example, either by letting the earth open and swallow me up, or by striking me dead. But before Mr. Wesley concluded his sermon, he cried out, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." I said, "If that be true, I will turn to God to-day." I immediately went home, and began to read and pray, keeping out of bad company for about a fortnight, and hearing Mr. Wesley as often as I could. But my old companions missed me, and came to see what was the matter. When they found me reading the Bible, they cursed and swore, and dragged me away to an ale-house, where I sat down, and began to reason with them. But, oh, how dangerous is it to encounter Satan on his own ground! for, as I talked, I began to drink a little, and the liquor getting into my head, I quarrelled with them and fought; and as I was going to my quarters, a lewd woman met me, and I had no power to resist her, and was again taken captive by the devil. Nevertheless, when I had slept, I was so terrified I thought I never durst pray any more, or expect mercy. I was determined, however, to hear Mr. Charles Wesley that night; and by his preaching, I had some hopes that my day of grace was not over. Then I began to pray again, and

read the Scriptures; and one Sunday morning I called at Whitehall Chapel, where the sacrament was going to be delivered. I went to the table with trembling limbs and a heavy heart; but no sooner had I received, than I found power to believe that Jesus Christ had shed His blood for me, and that God, for His sake, had forgiven my offences. Then was my heart filled with love to God and man; and since then sin hath not had dominion over me.'

These sayings of the soldier were a blessing to me; for they sank deep into my mind, and made me cry more earnestly that God would work the same change in my heart. I found my soul much refreshed at the sacrament on the Sunday after, and mightily encouraged under Mr. Wesley's sermon in the afternoon. All the week after I felt an awful sense of God resting upon me; and I had a great watchfulness over my words, and several short visits of love, having great hope that I had got complete victory over my besetting sin. But passion was yet too strong for me; for that night I fell again, and cried out immediately, 'I am undone; I have lost all hopes of mercy.' All the night I was as if I had been given up to Satan. In the morning, one prayed with me, but I found no answer; for my heart was as hard as a rock.

When I went back to my lodging at noon, dinner was ready; and the gentlewoman said, 'Come, sit down: you have need of your dinner, for you have eaten nothing to-day.' But when I looked on the meat, I said, 'Shall such a wretch

as I devour the good creatures of God in the state I am now in? No; I deserve to be thrust into hell.' I then went into my chamber, shut the door, and fell down on my knees, crying, 'Lord, save, or I perish!' When I had prayed till I could pray no more, I got up and walked to and fro, being resolved I would neither eat nor drink till I had found the kingdom of God. I fell down to prayer again, but found no relief; got up and walked again: then tears began to flow from my eyes, like great drops of rain, and I fell on my knees a third time; but now I was as dumb as a beast, and could not put up one petition, if it would have saved my soul. I kneeled before the Lord some time, and saw myself a criminal before the Judge; then I said, 'Lord, Thy will be done; damn or save!' That moment Jesus Christ was as evidently set before the eye of my mind, as crucified for my sins, as if I had seen Him with my bodily eyes: and in that instant my heart was set at liberty from guilt and tormenting fear, and filled with a calm and serene peace. I could then say, without any dread or fear, 'Thou art my Lord and my God.' Now did I begin to sing that part of the 12th chapter of Isaiah, 'O Lord, I will praise Thee; though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortest me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation.' My heart was filled with love to God and every soul of man: next to my wife and children, my mother, brethren,

and sisters, my greatest enemies had an interest in my prayers; and I cried, 'O Lord, give me to see my desire on them: let them experience Thy redeeming love!'

In the afternoon I opened the book where it is said, 'Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood,' &c.; with which I was so affected that I could not read for weeping. That evening, under Mr. Wesley's sermon, I could do nothing but weep, and love, and praise God, for sending His servant into the fields to show me the way of salvation. All that day I neither ate nor drank anything: for before I found peace, the hand of God was so heavy upon me that I refused to eat; and after I had found peace, I was so filled with the manna of redeeming love that I had no need of the bread that perisheth for that season.

At night, when I came home, the gentlewoman of the house where I had lodged a long time told me to provide a lodging; for I must stay there no longer than that one night, since her husband was afraid some mischief would come either on them or me, with so much praying and fuss as I had made about religion. I told them I would come on Wednesday night, and pay what I owed them, and fetch my clothes away, praying that God might reward them for the kindness they had showed me: for I had had a fever in the house; and no one could show more compassion to a stranger than they did to me at that time.

On Wednesday night, according to my promise, I went to my old lodging, and paid what I owed,

and got my clothes ready to bring away. But having forgotten something, I stepped back into the room to look for it. In the meantime, the man said to his wife, 'Suppose John should be right, and we wrong, it will be a sad thing to turn him out of doors.' When I came down, the woman stood at the door, and said, 'You shall not go out of this house to-night.' I said, 'What, will you neither let me go nor stay?' She replied, 'My husband is not willing you should go: for he saith, if God has done anything more for you than for us, he would have you show us how we may find the same mercy.' So I sat down with them, and told them of God's dealings with my soul, and prayed with them. Soon after, they both went to hear Mr. Wesley, when the woman was made a partaker of the same grace; and I hope to meet them both in heaven.

On the Saturday following, the dragon stood ready to devour my new-born soul; for my master's chief foreman came to me, saying, 'John Nelson, you must look after such and such men to-morrow: there is a piece of work to be done with all speed; for the Lords of the Exchequer will be here on a particular day, by which time it must be completed.' 'Sir,' I replied, 'you have forgotten yourself: to-morrow is the Sabbath.' He said he knew that as well as I; but the King's business required haste, and it was common to work on the Sunday for His Majesty, when anything was upon the finish. I told him I would not work upon the Sabbath for any man in England, except it was to quench fire,

or something that required the same immediate help. He said, 'Religion has made you a rebel against the King.' I answered, 'No, sir; it has made me a better subject than ever I was.' I added, 'The greatest enemies the King has are the Sabbath-breakers, swearers, drunkards, and whoremongers; for these pull down God's judgements upon both King and country.' Then he said, if I would not obey him, I should lose my business. I replied, 'I cannot help it: though it may be ten pounds out of my way to be turned out of my work at this time of the year, I will not wilfully offend God; for I had much rather want bread; nay, I would rather see my wife and children beg their bread bare-footed to heaven, than ride in a coach to hell.' He swore, if I went on awhile, I should be as mad as Whitefield; and added, 'What hast thou done, that thou needest make so much ado about salvation? I always took thee to be as honest a man as any I have in the work, and could have trusted thee with five hundred pounds.' I answered, 'So you might, and not have lost one penny by me.' He said, 'What, hast thou killed somebody, or committed adultery, that thou art so much afraid of being damned?' I replied, 'God takes the will for the deed; and though clear from those acts, I deserve to be damned tenfold for other crimes; for if I sin wilfully against God, after He hath showed me such mercy, I may expect to have the hottest hell.' He said, 'I have a worse opinion of thee now than ever.' I replied, 'Master, I have the odds of you; for I have a

much worse opinion of myself than you can have.'

At night, when I went to receive my wages, he asked me if I were still obstinate. I answered, 'I am determined not to break the Sabbath; for I will run the hazard of wanting bread here, before I would run the hazard of wanting water hereafter.' He said, 'Wesley has made a fool of thee, and thou wilt beggar thy family.' I had a glorious Sabbath the next day; for God blessed my soul wonderfully, both under the word and at the sacrament.

I went on Monday morning to the Exchequer, to take care of my tools, not expecting to work there any more. But God hath the hearts of all men in His own hand; for he that was so wroth with me on the Saturday now gave me good words, and bade me set the men to work. From that time he carved better for me than before; neither did he set any man to work on the Sabbath, as he had said he would. So I see it is good to obey God, and cast our care upon Him, who will order all things well; for if we refuse to join the wicked, it will be a restraint to them.[1]

In the time of my convictions, I never let my wife know of my trouble; but now I could not eat my morsel alone. I therefore wrote to her and all my relations, to seek the same mercy that I had found. However, all I said seemed as idle tales to most of them.

[1] The old Methodists of City Road informed Dr. Osborn that Nelson carved some of the stonework on the front of the houses on the north side of Finsbury Square. (See Wesley's *Journal*, Standard Ed., vol. iii. p. 11.)

Some weeks after, three gentlemen (professed Deists) fell upon me, and reasoned with me for about an hour; but the Lord put such words in my mouth that made them say Mr. Wesley had taught me his own lesson, and I was sunk so deep into enthusiasm that I was past recovery. Nevertheless, I see it is bad for weak believers to reason with men of corrupt principles; for after some time the enemy brought their words to my mind, and began to reason with me in this manner: 'Suppose Jesus Christ should be an impostor (as these men say He is), thou art lost for ever.' Oh the distress I was in for a short time. But I made a stop, and said, 'If Jesus Christ be not the Son of God, and my Saviour, I will be damned; for I will have no other.' Then the cloud broke, and my soul was so filled with love that I thought if all the world, yea, and the devils in hell, were to set on me, they could not make me disbelieve that Jesus Christ is the very and true God, and my Redeemer.

I daily reproved all that sinned in the work where I was; so that none of them would swear in my presence. But having no Christian friend to converse with, I kept close to God in prayer, and read the Bible at all opportunities, and heard one of the Mr. Wesleys every Sunday, and stirred up many others to hear them. And though I had many trials, I was so kept by the power of God that nothing disturbed my peace for some time.

Once, however, as I was reading in the Bible, a gentlewoman (that lived in part of the house) brought me a book, and said, 'You are often

reading the Bible: if you please, I will lend you this book. My mother,' she added, 'took delight in reading therein.' I thanked her, and began to read. For some pages it was agreeable to many things I had experienced in the time of conviction; but it was not at all correspondent to my experience as to my conversion: pleading for sin after conversion, to keep the saints humble, and making God the author of all sin.

Then the enemy began to reason with me that I ought not to reprove sin any more. From that time, my love began to cool both unto God and man, and my zeal for the salvation of others abated; and though the more I read the worse I was, yet I was tempted to read it through.

Before I read in that book, I did not know there was a man in the world who held such an opinion; for, in my trials, I believed every threatening in the Bible was against the disobedient, and every promise to those that turn to God. But now I was tempted to think I was safe, do whatever I would. Yet I still prayed, 'Lord, let me died, rather than live to sin against Thee!'

I had never spoken to Mr. Wesley in my life, nor conversed with an experienced man about religion. I longed to find one to talk with; but I sought in vain, for I could find none.

One time, as I was reasoning about what I had read, I opened the Bible on these words, 'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not.' I then prayed, 'O Lord, what I know not do Thou teach me!' And I thought I would wait upon the Lord

in fasting and prayer till He revealed His will to me ; and I did, for several weeks, fast from Thursday night to eight o'clock on Saturday morning, spending the time I was off my work either upon my knees at prayer, or in searching the Scriptures ; and before I opened my Bible, I prayed that God would open my understanding to comprehend what I read. I think the first scripture that was applied to me was, ' As ye have received the Lord Jesus, so walk in Him.' Then I remembered what state my soul was in when I first received His Spirit in my heart ; that it was filled with love to every soul, and I could pray for all my enemies as well as myself ; but this book had turned me out of that blessed state, by setting me to reason about opinions that I never heard of in my life till several weeks after I had received the love of Christ ; therefore I said in my mind, ' Let it be right or wrong, it is not necessary for salvation. I found the Lord to be my Saviour before I knew there was a man in the world of that opinion ; and before I read it, I loved both God and man better than I have done since, and was more useful in reproving and doing good than I am now.' I then prayed that God would give me that simplicity and godly sincerity that I walked in when He first revealed Christ in my heart. And He answered me in a wonderful manner ; so that my tongue was loosed to reprove, and my heart again enlarged to pray for every soul of man.

I now went on my way rejoicing for some days, and had so much of the Lord all the day long

that my soul seemed to breathe its life in God as naturally as my body breathed life in the common air. But, one day, I reproved a man for swearing; when he told me he was predestined to it, and did not trouble himself about it at all: for if he were one of the elect, he should be saved; but if not, all he could do would not alter God's decree: so that all I said to him seemed to take no more hold on him than if I had thrown a leather ball against a rock. I thought God was very good to me, who kept me ignorant of these opinions till I knew my part in the all-atoning blood; for I feared if I had heard such things in the time of my distress, they would have been the destruction of my body and soul. Yet I durst not say anything against that opinion, but wished I had some experienced man to converse with about it; for I was brought into heaviness again by reasoning: but, alas! not one could I find.

I still continued to wait on the Lord, with fasting and prayer. One fast-day, being greatly perplexed, I opened the book on these words, 'As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner.' Then my heart was set at liberty; and I cried out, 'Glory be to Thee, O Lord; for Thou hast given me Thy word and Thy Spirit in my heart, to bear witness that Thou art no respecter of persons.'

Now I found such a desire for the salvation of souls that I hired one of the men to go and hear Mr. Wesley preach; who has since told me it was the best thing, both for him and his wife, that ever man did for them.

All that hard winter, I still fasted from Thursday night to Saturday morning; and gave away the meat that I should have eaten to the poor, spending my time in praying and reading the Scriptures.

About this time several came to see me, who, finding me at work, looked at each other like men amazed, and said they were glad to see me so well. I told them I had not had one day's sickness for six months. They said, 'A man that worketh at the Treasury with you told us you had been hearing that false prophet, Wesley, and he had made you go mad, and incapable of working.' 'Well,' said I, 'here is my master: he can testify that I have not lost one day's work this half-year; nor was I ever better able to do any work in all my life. But I have heard Mr. Wesley, and have reason to bless God for it; for he is God's messenger for my good.' Some words that I spoke seemed to stick in them; so that I hope Satan will lose ground by that false and ill-grounded report.

The enemy, however, now came upon me with other temptations, and prepared such instruments to destroy my soul that I feared I should be overcome, and perish at last; for wherever I went the snare was laid for me, and my soul was so harassed with my wicked dreams that I have often awaked and found my pillow wet with tears, after thinking that the enemy would reason with me about some sin I had committed in my dream. But this drove me more to prayer, and showed me my corrupt nature in such a light that I abhorred myself, and thought the Lord never undertook to save

one more like the devil in nature than I was; and it was often impressed on my mind that if I held out to the end, I should have great reason to sing louder in the Redeemer's praise than any other soul in heaven.

I would fain have known whether any one that had the grace of God in him was tempted day and night as I was; but, my business being altogether at the Court end of the town, I had no one to open my mind to. Then I took up the Bible, and, after praying, happened on these words of St. James: 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of glory, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him.'

One night, after a day of fasting, I dreamed that I was in Yorkshire, in my working-clothes, going home; and, as I went by Paul Champion's, I heard a mighty cry, as of a multitude of people in distress; and I saw, in my dream, the large court behind John Rhodes's as full of people as they could stand by one another. All on a sudden, they began to scream and tumble one over another. I asked what was the matter; and they told me Satan was let loose among them, and begged of me to get out of the way, for he was coming. But I said, 'By the grace of God, I will not turn to the right hand or to the left for him.' Then I thought I saw him in the shape of a red bull, running through the people, as a beast runs through the standing corn; yet he did not offer to gore any of them, but made directly at me, as if he would run his horns into my heart. Then

I cried out, 'Lord, help me!' and immediately caught him by the horns, and twisted him on his back, setting my right foot on his neck, in the presence of a thousand people; and I bade them cry to Jesus, assuring them that what they had seen me do He would enable them to do. When I awoke, I was in a sweat, and my body was as much fatigued as if I had been at hard labour; but my soul was filled with joy.

A little after this, as I was reading the Scriptures, a letter came to me. I saw it was not from my wife: then I said, 'I fear here is bad news.' Upon opening it, I found my daughter was dead, whom I formerly idolized; my son was so ill that his life was despaired of; my wife had fallen from a horse, and was lamed; my father-in-law was dead, and my mother was sick. It then came to my mind that, when I was at the sacrament, I had made a free-will offering to the Lord of my body and soul, wife and children, and all that was near and dear to me; but I thought, 'How shall I bear it, now the Lord has taken them at my hand?' I went to prayer, and found my heart wholly resigned to the will of God. Then it came to me, 'Let the dead bury their dead; but follow thou Me.' I began to read again, and the people of the house where I was scolded me because I did not weep, wring my hands, and stamp as they did, at the loss of a child, saying I was a hard-hearted father. I replied, 'I cannot tell how to choose what is best; but God cannot err.'

The May following [1740], I was ordered to take

some men, and go to Lord Onslow's, near Guildford, in Surrey, to do a piece of work that would last all summer. This was heavy tidings; for I thought I was but weak in faith, and should be deprived of hearing Mr. Wesley, and have no one to converse with. I desired to be excused; but all in vain. I believe I should have left my master, but I thought it would be unjust to leave him in such a busy time, when he had kept me employed all that hard winter. However, it made me cry to the Lord to go with me, and protect me from both my inward and outward enemies. And He was gracious, enabling me to reprove all that sinned in my presence; so that a young gentleman said to some of the men, 'Of what religion is your foreman? Is he a Baptist, or is he a Quaker?' They replied, 'No, sir; he is of the Church of England.' He said, 'He may tell you so, but he is no Churchman; for we can hardly speak at table but he is reproving us; and if he say but one word, we cannot persuade him to drink a glass more.' I overheard him, though he did not see me; and said, 'Sir, you give a bad character of the Church of England, if you say a man cannot be a Churchman that reproves others for cursing and swearing, and refuses to drink to excess.'

One day, the Speaker of the House of Commons[1] came to visit my lord; and taking a view of the work, he asked me many questions about it, which I answered as well as I could. He said, 'This is a fine house, and a fine estate of land

[1] Arthur Onslow, M.P. for Surrey, Speaker 1728–1761.

about it! But what will it signify? For a piece of land, six feet long and three broad, will fit me shortly.' He then fetched a deep sigh, went away, and walked alone among the trees.

While I was at Guildford I had several conversations with some Baptists.[1] But, alas! their religion lay in notions. I found no true experience amongst them. I reasoned with them about the necessity of the new birth; and contended with many other sects that all religion without the life of Christ manifested in us would profit us nothing at last.

I heard that some who were called serious people said I was a dangerous man to converse with; and others shunned my company after I had talked with them. Then I thought I would leave off reproving and reasoning, for I made myself to be abhorred. I cried out, 'Lord, show me what is Thy will in the matter!' and then laid me down in great heaviness. That night I dreamed I saw a tall young person in a white vesture, whose face shone like the sun, standing at the foot of my bed, who said unto me, 'Arise, and praise the Lord.' I thought a great light shone round my bed, by which I saw myself defiled from the top of my head to the sole of my foot; and answered, 'How can such an unclean creature show forth the praises of God?' Then I thought he showed me a river as clear as crystal, with fine green grass growing at the bottom thereof, in which he bade me wash and be clean. I thought I went at his bidding, and as soon as

[1] The Baptist cause at Guildford dates from 1597.

my feet were dipped in the water, the filth dropped from my whole body; nevertheless, the water was not defiled by it, at which I was surprised. When I came to the middle of the river, it was deeper than I was high, and I knew I could not swim; yet my soul was so filled with the sense of God's love that my head was kept above water. I then thought I spread my hands, like a man who is going to swim, and as I laboured to swim I rose up out of the water, and was carried, as on the wings of an eagle, above the clouds, and cried, 'Hosanna to the King of heaven!' And, though asleep, I sang so loud that I awoke the people of the house. I now resolved to reprove again, and seemed to do it with more authority than before; and my words began to stick to some, and cause them to reform their lives.

About Michaelmas I came back to London: and several that used to attend Mr. Wesley's preaching at Kennington Common and Moorfields, who had also joined with him in the Foundery, came to see me; at which I was surprised, having no correspondence with them, any further than speaking one to another as we went from place to place to hear him preach. At their first coming, I thought it was the thing I longed for; often wishing that I had some Christian friends to converse with. They said they heard I was come to town, and the love they bore me made them come to see me. I answered, 'I thank you: pray how does my good friend Mr. Wesley do?' They replied, 'We do not know: poor dear man, he is wandering in the dark; but we hope our Saviour will

open his eyes, and let him see that he is a blind leader of the blind.' Their words were as a sword running through my liver, and made me cry out, 'Lord, have mercy upon me! What is the matter with him?' They answered, 'Poor dear man, he is under the law, and does not know the privilege of the gospel himself; therefore he preaches law and works.' I said, 'Then he is strangely altered since I left London; for when I was in town, he preached repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus; teaching the necessity of both as clearly from Scripture as any man in England could, and showing the fruits of faith as plainly as it is possible for any man to do; and I found his word to be more blessed to me than any man's I ever heard in my life.' They told me that 'I had never heard the gospel in my life, except I had heard the Brethren that preached in Fetter Lane; for they were the men that were come to lead the people into true stillness.' I said, 'What do you mean by true stillness?' They replied, 'It is to cease from our own works, such as fasting and prayer, reading the Bible, and running to church and sacrament; and wholly to rely on the blood and wounds of the Lamb.' I said, 'I do not know that I ever heard either of the Mr. Wesleys bid any man trust in prayer, or reading, or going to sacrament, or giving of alms, for salvation, either in whole or in part.' But they answered, 'Why doth he teach men to do these things, if they are not to be saved by them?' I replied, 'If I understand Mr. Wesley rightly, he only speaks of them as

Christ and His apostles speak of them; that is, to wait in them as a beggar waits for a morsel at a man's door. I never spoke to Mr. Wesley in my life; therefore, I know not what he believes, any farther than by his preaching.' They told me that most of the people who had followed him before I left London had forsaken him, and were become happy sinners now; and wished I would go and hear the Brethren; for Mr. Wesley was only a John Baptist, to go before and prepare them for the Brethren to build up: adding, 'If you go to hear him, he will bring you into bondage; and you will never be happy till you are free from the law: for we were never happy till we left him, and went to hear Mr. Molther; and till then we were under the law.' I replied, 'Pray were you not converted before you left Mr. Wesley?' They answered, 'Yes, we had gone through a great deal of trouble, and found great peace and joy, knowing our sins were forgiven; but when we heard Mr. Molther, we found we were yet under the law: for he showed the privilege of the gospel, and we found we had not such a privilege; for if we broke the law in any little matter, we were quite unhappy; or if we neglected to pray, or missed a sermon or two, then we were uneasy; but now we are happy, for the Lamb hath done all for us.' I said, 'Though He hath done His part, yet the apostle teaches us to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling; and we are bidden to pray always, and search the Scriptures; and St. Paul fasted often, and kept his body in subjection, lest,

when he had preached to others, himself should be a castaway. But you are become wiser than the apostle, and have got another gospel: though he said, if he or an angel from heaven should preach another gospel, let him be accursed. I am afraid you are deceived, and are seeking a happiness that is separated from holiness; if so, you are led away by a deceiving spirit; for if you commit sin, and break the righteous law of God, and still continue happy, without any conviction that God is offended with you, your consciences are seared as with a hot iron.' They answered, 'You are a poor unhappy man, and as blind as Mr. Wesley'; and so left me, without either praying with me or for me.

When I came to reason about what they had said, and to compare it with the words of our Lord and His apostles, I saw their scheme of salvation was as contrary to that of Christ as darkness is to light. This drove me to prayer, and made me double my diligence in reading the Bible.

In a few days after, two more, that were a little acquainted with me, came to see me. I asked them how Mr. Wesley was. They said they did not know, for they did not hear him now. I asked, 'Why do you not?' They replied, 'He denieth the faith of the gospel.' I said, 'I am sorry for it; but I hope you are only wrong informed.' They answered, 'We have heard ourselves.' I replied, 'What do you call the faith of the gospel?' They said, 'Predestination and election.' I told them I thought it was not the faith of the gospel; but it was rather for every one to

believe in his heart that he is a fallen spirit, by nature a child of wrath, and by practice an heir of hell; and that the eternal Son of God out of love to me, a poor helpless and hell-deserving creature, laid His glory by, and for my sake fulfilled all righteousness, at last giving His body for my body and His soul for my soul; and that God, for the sake of His obedience and blood-shedding, hath forgiven all my sins. I said, 'According to the light I have, this is the faith of the gospel; and he that is a partaker of this faith hath received the Spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind; power to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live a godly, righteous, and sober life.' I added, 'Pray, under whom were you converted?' They both replied, 'Under Mr. Charles Wesley.' 'Did he then preach what you now call the gospel?' They replied, 'No.' 'Did God then reveal that to you to be the faith of the gospel as soon as He wrote pardon on your hearts?' They said, 'No: when we were in our first love, we believed as Mr. Wesley believes; but now we see better, and hope his eyes will be opened shortly.' I said, 'I fear yours are become dim: for I think you are more light and unwatchful than you used to be; and you own you have lost your first love. Oh, remember, Christ bids you repent and do your first works, or He will remove your candlestick!' But they told me, 'Do what we will, we cannot finally fall.' I answered that as far as I could learn by their words and behaviour they were already fallen: and I wished they did

not make a Christ of their opinions; for though I allow many good men hold these opinions, yet I judge all that were converted under the two Mr. Wesleys were at first filled with love to every man, and a perfect hatred to all sin, and were inspired with a zeal for God's glory and the welfare of all mankind.—'Was not this your state once?' They owned it was, till they heard Mr. Sawyers; and it was by him they saw into the electing love of God. I replied, 'I fear you have sinned against light and love; and, instead of going back to the Lord, by true repentance, and seeking a fresh pardon in the blood of Christ, you have been gadding about to seek new opinions: you have gone out of the highway of holiness, and have now got into the devil's pinfold: you are not seeking to perfect holiness in the fear of God, but are resting in opinions, that give you liberty to live after the flesh: and if you continue so to live, you are safe in his hold, out of which you will be brought to the slaughter.' They told me I was as stupid as Mr. Wesley. I replied Satan had preached that doctrine to me before they did; and God had armed me against both him and them. Then they left me in my blind estate, as they called it; and I prayed that I might never turn out of the way that God had called me into.

On Sunday I had the opportunity of hearing Mr. John Wesley once more; and his word was precious food to my soul. Then I blessed the Lord, that had still kept His servant, as an iron pillar, in the same spirit in which I left him. But

I observed a great part of the congregation were strangers to me: for many of the old hearers were gone, and others come in. When I found that some had turned to the Germans, and some to the Predestinarians, I said, 'O Lord, I will praise Thee; for Thou doest all things well. Thou by Thy providence didst send me out of town when the enemy was rending Thy flock to pieces, and thereby Thy servant hath escaped the snare.'

A few weeks after,[1] I was at St. Paul's, where Mr. John Wesley also was; and I contrived to walk with him after sacrament: for I had often wished I could speak with him, therefore I seized this opportunity; so we continued in discourse all the way from St. Paul's to the farther end of Upper Moorfields; and it was a blessed conference to me. When we parted, he took hold of my hand, and, looking me full in the face, bade me take care I did not quench the Spirit. I had not such an opportunity again while I stayed in London, either with him or his brother; but I kept close to God by fasting and prayer; and the Lord helped me through many trials.

One night, after I had been delivered from grievous temptations, my soul was filled with such a sense of God's love as made me weep before Him. In the night I dreamed I was in Yorkshire, going from Gomersal Hill-Top to Cleckheaton; and about the middle of the lane I thought I saw Satan coming to meet me in the shape of a tall, black man, and the hair of his

[1] Oct. 19, 1740. See Standard Ed. Wesley's *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 393.

head like snakes : but I thought I was not afraid at all ; and I said, ' Stand by me, O Lord ; and I will not turn to the right hand or to the left.' Yet I thought I would not stand to fight with him as I used to do. When he came within about five paces of me, he stood : but I went on, ripped open my clothes, and showed him my naked breast, saying, ' See, here is the blood of Christ.' Then I thought he fled from me as fast as a hare could run.

I was still attacked by the Moravians on one side and the Predestinarians on the other ; but the Lord enabled me to stop their mouths, and to show them that they had lost their first love. Yet they seemed to be hardened and past all conviction. And the more I read the Scriptures, the more I was confirmed that they were fallen into carnal security ; which made me pray more earnestly that God would preserve me from all the snares of the devil.

About ten days before Christmas I went to St. Paul's ; and while I was at the communion-table, I felt such an awful sense of God resting upon me that my heart was like melting wax before Him ; and all my prayer was, ' Thy will be done ! Thy will be done ! ' I was so dissolved into tears of love that I could scarce take the bread ; and after I had received, it was impressed on my mind, ' I must go into Yorkshire directly.' But I said in myself, ' If I do, it will be ten pounds out of my way.' I had determined to go at May-day ; but I thought to stay for the sake of money would be wrong, when I believed it was

the will of God I should go. So I packed up my clothes, and set out. I found much of the Lord's presence all the way I went; but I had no more thought of preaching than I had of eating fire.

When I got home, I was greatly disappointed; for I expected to find many of my relations converted, as I understood they attended Mr. Ingham's preaching. But when I explained to them what it was to be converted, they said they never heard of such a thing in their lives. I told them I knew those things by happy experience. But they begged I would not tell any one that my sins were forgiven; for no one would believe me; and they should be ashamed to show their faces in the street. I answered, 'I shall not be ashamed to tell what God has done for my soul, if I could speak loud enough for all the men in the world to hear me at once.' My mother said, 'Your head is turned.' I replied, 'Yes, and my heart too, I thank the Lord.' My wife told me she was ashamed to put her head out of doors; for every one was talking about me, and upbraiding her with my sayings; and she wished I had stayed in London; for she could not live with me if I went on as I did: for which reason she desired that I would leave off abusing my neighbours, or go back to London. I answered I did not care what all the people could say; for I was determined to reprove any one that sinned in my presence. Then she cried and said I did not love her so well as I used to do. I replied, 'Yes, I love thee better than ever I did in my life: and thou hast no reason to dispute my love; for I

have been careful to provide for thee, whether I was at home or abroad: and we have been happy in each other upwards of twelve years; but if thou wilt seek for redemption in the blood of Christ, we shall be ten times happier than ever.' She then said, 'Nay, my happiness with thee is over; for, according to thy words, I am a child of the devil, and thou a child of God.' Then she wept, and said, 'I cannot live with thee.' I said, 'Why so? Thou shalt never want while I am able, by honest endeavours, to provide for thee. Nay,' I continued, 'if thou wilt not go to heaven with me, I will do the best I can for thee; only I will not go to hell with thee for company. But I believe God will hear my prayer, and convert thy soul, and make thee a blessed companion for me in the way to heaven.' After this my wife began to be concerned about the salvation of her soul.

A few days after I had got home, David Taylor came to preach in our town, in Mr. Ingham's society, when I went to hear him: and a dry morsel his sermon was. Several that were acquainted with him followed me, and wanted to know how I liked the discourse. I was backward to tell them; but they pressed hard on me, and said, 'Do you not think he is as good a preacher as Mr. Wesley?' I said, 'There is no comparison between his preaching and Mr. Wesley's: he has not stayed long enough in the large room at Jerusalem.' After they had been gone some time, they came again to ask what I meant. I said, 'He is not endued with power from on high.'

They went and related to him what I said; and he told me since that, if I had been present, he could have stabbed me; yet he could not rest till he went to hear Mr. Wesley in London. Then he found what was said was true; and he came down to Sheffield and into Derbyshire, preaching what he called Wesley's doctrine, and awakened and converted many scores of people, till the Germans got to him, and made him deny the law of God: then he became as salt without savour.

I went afterwards to a meeting of Mr. Ingham's, where one read in an old book for nearly an hour; then sung a hymn, and read a form of prayer. I told them that way would never convert sinners, and began to relate some of my experience; and several were struck with convictions while I was speaking, some of whom became witnesses of the same grace that God showed me.

In a little time all I said was noised abroad; and people of all denominations came to dispute with me. As soon as I came home from work my house was filled with people, which made my wife uneasy; for she could do no work, and did not yet believe what I said was true. Generally when I came in and sat down, some one would ask me a question, and others would begin to dispute with me, while others stood by to hear.

When any began to cavil, I commonly asked, 'What church do you belong to?' and if they said the Church of England, then I replied, 'Do you know your sins forgiven?' Several said, 'No, nor ever expect to know it in this world.' Then I replied, 'You are no members of the

Church of England, if you have not a full trust and confidence that God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Read the Homilies of the Church, and you will see what I say is true.' I used to have the Bible and Common Prayer Book by me; and I showed them the Articles of the Church, saying, 'You deny inspiration; and the Church you profess to belong to says, "Before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of His Spirit, no good works can be done." So, if the Church speaks rightly, you must be inspired by the Spirit of Christ, to enable you to bring forth good fruit, or you must be the fuel of hell. And how dare you to pray to have your thoughts cleansed by the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, if you do not believe there is any such thing to be attained in this world? Oh do not mock God any more, by asking for things with your mouths when you do not believe in your hearts He will grant them.' But one said, 'I have been with a very learned clergyman of a neighbouring church; and he told me there was no such thing to be attained in this life.' I answered, 'I think you have mistaken him; for I was at that church last Sunday, and heard him declare all I have said to you.' He said, 'I was there, and heard no such thing mentioned.' I replied, 'No! did you not hear him affirm "that God had given power and commandment to His ministers, to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the absolution of their sins?" And he farther declared that "God pardoneth and absolveth all those that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe His gospel."

Therefore, it is plain, you never did repent, nor unfeignedly believe His gospel, if God has not pardoned and absolved you from your sins. Else both he and all that are in priest's orders in England are false witnesses before God and man. And how many times have you besought God to "give you true repentance; and to forgive you all your sins, negligences, and ignorances; and to endue you with the grace of His Holy Spirit, that you might amend your lives according to His holy word?" And now you say there is no such thing! Though you may remember Mr. R. said, "Let us beseech God to grant us true repentance, and His Holy Spirit, that those things may please Him which we do at this present, and that the rest of our lives may be pure and holy." '

By these discourses many were pricked to the heart, and durst not offer the sacrifice of fools any more; they prayed in good earnest that God would pardon their sins, and answer them to the joy of their hearts.

When any said they were of the Church of Scotland, I asked them if they did not know their sins forgiven. They told me that they did not; nay, farther, they thought it presumption for any one to pretend to know it, or to expect such high attainments as I spoke of; and they told me I was a Papist, or I would not talk as I did. I answered, 'I know not what you think of me; but I think you neither know what a Papist nor Presbyterian is; for your own mouths declare that you are no members of the Church of Scotland. That Church disowns you; for none

are allowed members thereof but those that are effectually called. And they that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification, adoption, and sanctification. And the same Church saith that justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein He pardoneth all our sins; that adoption is an act of God's free grace, by which we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of God's sons; and that sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the inner man, after the whole image of God; and all that are so effectually called do enjoy an assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost. And I pray you, what have I said more? By your talking, you are the sons of Rome, and enemies to the true Protestant religion. Let me beg you to go home, and read the Assembly's Catechism, and come and talk with me again, after you have read it.' Several of them did so, and came with tears in their eyes, and are now witnesses that God has power on earth to forgive sins.

I found it always in my mind not to let any depart that came to dispute with me till we had prayed together. The first that was brought to experience the redeeming love of Christ was my own brother; and in a few days six of my neighbours.

My wife also was thoroughly convinced that she must experience the same work of grace, or perish. During the time of her convictions she was seized with a pleurisy, and her case was

thought to be very dangerous. Then I besought the Lord for her with fasting and prayer. The next day she was worse; and the distress of her soul increased the disorder of her body, so that she seemed as if she could not subsist long. That night my house was filled with people, and none of them offered to dispute with me. I read several portions of Scripture to them, some out of the Old, some out of the New Testament, and compared one with another, and prayed with them. As I was in prayer, my wife, being in the parlour, and within hearing, fainted, and was as if she had just sunk into the gulf of God's judgements. Immediately she thought she felt the Lord Jesus catch her as she was falling, and lay His hand on her side, where the disorder was, and bade her be of good comfort; telling her, 'Thy sins are forgiven.' When I came to the bed-side, she was just come to herself, and said, 'My dear, the Lord has healed me both in body and soul! I will get up and praise His holy name'; which she accordingly did. From that hour her fever ceased, and her heart was filled with peace and love.

Now God had raised up eight witnesses to Himself in this place; and the enemies began to report that I had forgiven such and such their sins, which made many come and talk with me.

One night I went to Adwalton, to hear Mr. Ingham preach. As soon as I got into the house, he called me into the parlour, and desired the company that was with him to go out, for he had something to say to me. When they went out, he rose up, barred the door, then sat down by

me, and asked me how my wife did. When I had told him, he said, 'Do you know your own heart, think you?' I answered, 'Not rightly; but I know Jesus Christ; and He knows and hath taken possession of it; and though it be deceitful, yet He can subdue it to Himself; and I trust He will.' He said, 'Have you not deceived yourself with thinking that your sins are forgiven, and that you are in a state of grace? I was three years seeking before I found Him.' I replied, 'Suppose you were, do you confine God to be three years in converting every soul, because you were so long? God is as able to convert a soul in three days now as He was to convert St. Paul 1700 years ago.'—I then began to tell him what I had seen at London under Mr. Wesley's preaching. He said he pitied poor Mr. Wesley, for he was ignorant of his own state; and he spoke as if he believed Mr. Wesley to be an unconverted man; at which words my corrupt nature began to stir. But it came to my mind, 'The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God'; and I lifted up my heart to the Lord, and my mind was calmed in a moment. He said, 'You ought not to tell people that they may know their sins forgiven; for the world cannot bear it; and if such a thing were preached, it would raise persecution.' I replied, 'Let them quake that fear. By the grace of God, I love every man, but fear no man; and I will tell all I can that there is such a prize to run for. If I hide it, mischief will come upon me. There is a famine in the land; and I see myself in the case of the lepers

that were at the gate of Samaria, who found provision in the enemies' camp, and, when they had eaten and drunk, and loaded themselves, said, "We do not well; for this is a day of glad tidings: let us go and make it known to the king's household." When I found God's wrath removed for the sake of His dear Son, I saw provision enough for my poor fainting soul, and for all the world if they would come for it. I believe it is a sin not to declare to the children of men what God has done for my soul, that they may seek for the same mercy.' He told me I had nothing to do with the Old Testament, or to make comparisons from anything that was in it. I answered, 'I have as much to do with it as with the New Testament.' He replied, 'I would not have you speak any more to the people till you are better acquainted with your own heart.' I told him I would not in his societies, unless I was desired; but what I did in my own house, or in any other person's that requested me, he had no business with. I added, 'I do not belong to you; and though I have heard you several times, it is no benefit to me; for I have experienced more of the grace of God than ever I heard you preach of it, or any one since I left London.'

Soon after Mr. Ingham came out and began to preach; when I was greatly surprised, for what he had forbidden me to do he did directly—he told them that night they must know their sins forgiven in this world, or go to hell, if all the devils in hell could pull them in.

I still went on at my own house as before, every

night; and in about three weeks my eight were increased to seventeen.

As I was explaining Rom. vii., my mother fell into deep convictions, and cried, 'I am a lost sinner.' I went to prayer with her; and she neither ate pleasant bread nor took natural rest till she found redemption through the blood of Christ. Then she came to me with tears of joy, and said, 'Thank God on my behalf; for He hath dealt bountifully with me. When thou wast a lad, I had more trouble with thee than any other child; but God has more than rewarded me for all my trouble, in that He has raised thee up to show me the way of salvation.' She lived about six months after, and then died in the triumph of faith. She was the first ripe fruit that God gave me of my labour.

Soon after, another of my brothers, my aunt, and two cousins were converted; though still I did not attempt to preach, but read some part of the Scripture, then exhorted them to observe what they had heard, and so ended with prayer. And God wrought in a wonderful manner; for six or seven were converted in a week, for several weeks together. All this time I had no one to converse with, except such as wanted to turn me out of the narrow path; neither had I any correspondence with Mr. Wesley; but still I was as one set to labour in a field alone.

After some time, Peter Böhler came into Yorkshire, and laboured while Mr. Ingham went to London. I heard him, and he pleased me well; for at that time he spake to the purpose. When

he had done, I went and took him by the hand, and thanked him for his wholesome exhortation. He asked me my name. I told him. He saluted me, and said, 'My brother, I am glad to see you; for I have just now been talking with some that told me they were converted by you; and I like them better than any souls I have conversed with since I came into Yorkshire.' And he added, 'I will call to see you when I come to Birstall.' So he did, and stayed with me all night, and encouraged me to speak on, and spare none. He added, 'The Lord hath called you to labour in His vineyard; and if you do not labour, He will call you to judgement for it.' I told him that Mr. Ingham had forbidden me; but he said, 'He will be back from London in three weeks, then I will speak to him; for I know that God is with you; and I will call on you, whenever I come through this town.' So he did at that season; and his conversation was profitable to me; for he then spoke as contrary to the Moravians who are in London as black is to white. God blessed his word; for many were awakened by him at his first coming into Yorkshire.

When Mr. Ingham returned from London, he came to brother Mitchell's in our town, and sent for me. He saluted me as soon as I came in, and desired me to sit down by him, and said, 'John, I believe God has called you to speak His word; for I have spoken with several since I came back from London, who, I believe, have received grace since I went; and I see God is working in a shorter manner than He did with us

at the beginning; and I should be sorry to hinder any one from doing good.' He said also to the brethren and sisters, 'Before you all, I give John leave to exhort in all my societies.' He then took me by the hand, saying, 'John, God hath given you great honour, in that He hath made use of you to call sinners to the blood of our Saviour; and I desire you to exhort in all my societies as often as you can.'[1]

I did so; and many were struck to the heart, and were made to cry out, 'Lord, save, or we perish!' So that nine or ten in a week were brought to experience the love of Jesus. Those that were of the Church of England, I exhorted to keep close to the Church and sacrament; and the Dissenters, to keep to their own meetings, and to let their light shine before those of their own community. But soon after, I learned that Mr. Ingham advised the contrary, and several began to stay at home on the Sabbath; which made me very uneasy.

One night I had been disputing with several of them about their neglecting the ordinances, and about their speaking against inward holiness, as we were going to hear Peter Böhler, at Charles Summerscales's. When he got up, he took two verses of the tenth chapter of St. Matthew's

[1] It was probably at this time that Lady Huntingdon, accompanied by Mr. Ingham and Mr. Graves, went to Birstall to hear Nelson. He spoke for about half an hour to a large congregation; and the Countess, at parting, told him that God had called him to put his hand to the plough, and great would be his punishment if he dared to look back. (See *Life of the C. of Huntingdon*, vol. i. p. 254.)

Gospel: 'Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess before My Father which is in heaven: but whosoever shall deny Me before men, him also will I deny before My Father which is in heaven.' I thought if he had heard all that I had said, and had laboured to justify every word I had spoken, he could not have preached more to the purpose: for he said, to confess Jesus was to live to Him, and to honour Him with body, soul, and substance; and to deny Him was to live to ourselves, by refusing to do what He commanded, because it was not agreeable to nature, and did not make for our temporal interest. He added, 'If any one did so much as to keep the tip of his little finger to commit sin with, it would damn both his body and soul in hell.'

My adversaries now hung down their heads; and complaint was made to Mr. Töltschig that Mr. Böhler preached Wesley's doctrine; and he was sent to London soon after. He came back in three weeks' time; but such a change for the worse did I never see in mortal man! for he that professed to love me as his own soul durst not come near the door of my house, nor converse with me at all; and his word was as chaff in comparison of what it used to be.

Then I saw what was coming on me and the people God had given me. This made me weep in secret places before the Lord; and I desired to die rather than live to see the children devoured by these boars out of the German wood. I saw many deluded by their soft words and fair

speeches; and I thought I would exhort no more; for I was begetting children, and they slew them among the smooth stones of the brook; and they had better never have known the way of salvation than, after knowing it, be turned thereout. But Samuel Mitchell urged me to speak, and not to spare. Yet I found great backwardness; and often said, when I went out of my door, 'Lord, Thou knowest I had rather be hanged on that tree than go to preach; but that I believe Thou dost require it at my hand.' And many a time I have said, 'Except some one be converted this time, I will take it for granted that I may leave off speaking in Thy name.' But, oh, the condescension of the Most High! For He so far bore with my weakness that some were converted as sure as I asked the token. For all that, I acted the part of Jonah, and fled into the fields by a wood-side when a great congregation was gathered together and begged me to preach to them. But the hand of the Lord was upon me; and I fell flat on my face on the ground, and thought that if ever a living man tasted the cup of the damned, I did. I then cried out, 'Let me die! let me die! for why should I live to see the destruction of my people? Or wherefore should I ever speak in Thy name, and by Thy word beget children for the slaughter?' I lay about an hour with my face on the grass: but, oh, the anguish my soul was in! The sufferings of our Lord and His apostles were brought to my mind, whose cup I had once desired at the Lord's hands. But now, when it was in a small

degree put in my hand, I chose rather to die than to drink it.

I now began to be ashamed before the Lord, when I considered how wonderfully He had dealt with me; so that the tears began to flow, and my heart was broken within me. Then I said, 'I am not my own, but Thine: therefore, Thy will be done in me, on me, and by me.' In that instant the cloud broke, and the Sun of Righteousness arose on my soul: so that I cried out, 'Lord, continue with me as Thou art now, and I am ready to go to hell and preach to devils, if Thou require it.' Then I came home, expecting the people to be gone; but they were waiting about the door of my house. I got up and preached to them, and that night two men declared that God for Christ's sake had forgiven all their sins.

I thought after I had done, if I had had ten pounds, I would have given them for one hour's conversation with Mr. John Wesley; but I despaired of ever having an opportunity, except I went to London on purpose; and I said, 'I am not worthy of an upright man to converse with: therefore I am encompassed about with briers and thorns.'

After some time, I was told that there were twenty preachers come to the Smith House[1]; and that four or five of them were clergymen

[1] Smith House was in the year following (1742) the head-quarters for a time of the band of Moravians who on the twenty-sixth of May started from London to form a Yorkshire congregation. The 'twenty clergymen' referred to by Nelson may have been an earlier party. Ingham's Yorkshire societies were finally transferred to the Moravians.

who had been with Mr. Wesley; but they were now convinced of his errors, and content to be poor sinners, and hoped I should see my error in a little time, and come to the Brethren; for all of them, they said, had been as blind as I was, and as much bigoted to Mr. Wesley's notions. I told them that what they called light, I believed to be gross darkness; for it did not agree with what the Scriptures showed to be the way to heaven. One of their exhorters said to me that there were several of the Moravian preachers that could write as good Scriptures as the Bible; that the very power which the apostles had did rest on the Moravian preachers. I told him I did not believe a word of it: I believed them to be a fallen people; and I prayed God that they might repent, and do their first works. I said, 'I am sorry for Mr. Ingham; for he never will do half so much good as he has done hurt, by bringing them into this country; for they do not labour to convert sinners, but to turn saints out of the way that leads to heaven.' But he said it was I that was wrong, for they were the most experienced men in the world; and it was believed by many that Count Zinzendorf was so familiar with the Lamb that many hundreds who were now in hell would be saved by his prayers.

A few days after, they were to have a great meeting at Gomersal Field-house; and one came and told me that Mr. Ingham desired me to be there. Accordingly I went, but could not get into the house where they were reading the letters, nor

near the door, for the multitude: so I walked into the croft, where there were about two hundred people, who had gone from the door, because they could not hear; so I preached to them in the croft, while they read the letters within. I think there were five or six preachers, and four exhorters, and near a hundred people, who were looked upon as the chief of their societies. Then Mr. Ingham stood up, and said that the country-people were surprised to see so many of the Brethren come together; they thought it prudent not to have so much preaching till they were settled awhile, for fear it should make them persecute the Brethren; 'and I desire that none of the young men will expound till they are ordered by the Brethren. We shall meet again this day month; and then we will let you know what we are all to do.' Then he spake to them one by one, and said, 'I hope you will be obedient, and not expound any more till you have orders.' They all replied, 'Yes, sir.' He then turned to me, saying, 'John, I hope you will leave off till you have orders from the church.' I said, 'No, sir, I will not leave off: I dare not, for I did not begin by the order of man, nor by my own will; therefore, I shall not leave off by your order: for I tell you plainly I should have left off without your bidding but that I believed, if I did, I should be damned for disobedience.' He replied, 'You see these young men are obedient to the elders; and they have been blessed in their labours as well as you.' I said, 'I cannot tell how they have been blessed;

but I think, if God had sent them on His own errand, they would not stop at your bidding.' Then one of the preachers said, 'The spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets: therefore, they are right, and you are wrong; for they are subject.' I replied, 'You are not obedient to the prophets of God that were of old; for God saith by one of them, "I have set watchmen upon the walls of Jerusalem, that shall not cease day nor night"; but you can hold your peace for a month together, at man's bidding.' Then, turning to Mr. Ingham, I said, 'You know that many have been converted by my exhorting lately, and a great many are under convictions: what a sad thing then would it be to leave them as they are!' He replied, 'Our Saviour can convert souls without your preaching.' I replied, 'Yes, or yours either: and He can give us corn without ploughing or sowing, but He does not; neither hath He promised that He will.' He said, 'Be still one month, and then you will know more of your own heart.' I replied, 'With one proviso, I will.' He said, 'What is that?' I answered, 'If you can persuade the devil to be still for a month; but if he goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, and God hath put a sword into my hand, I am determined to attack him, wheresoever I meet him; and wheresoever I meet sin, I meet Satan.' Some of them said that their ears burned on their heads, to hear me speak to such a man as Mr. Ingham. I answered I would speak to a gentleman as I would to a beggar, in the cause of God.

Mr. Ingham said, 'It must needs be that offences will come; but woe to him by whom they do come.' I replied, 'Sir, take care that your curse does not fall on your own head.' Then he charged all the people, as they loved him and the Brethren, that they should not let me preach in their houses, nor encourage me by hearing me elsewhere. I replied, 'I hope you will not hinder those who were converted under my word from hearing me; for they are my own children.' He said they would hinder them; for they were none of mine, but our Saviour's children. I answered, 'I have as much right to call them my children as St. Paul had to call the Galatians his; and if they perish by being turned out of the way through you, I will require their blood at your hand.' Then Mr. Clapham said, 'May not I have some private conversation with John?' Mr. Ingham answered, 'Yes.' And Mr. Clapham said, 'He shall be my teacher while I live.' So it was; for he died in the faith within a fortnight.

When I got home, there were several people at my house waiting to be instructed in the way to the kingdom. One of them cried out, 'What is the matter? Are you not well? you look so pale!' I said, 'I have neither pain nor sickness of body: but my soul is disordered within me; for they have bereaved me of my children, and commanded them not to hear me before my face. Oh these treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously! I am sorry Mr. Ingham should be a tool in their hands, to turn the simple out of the way; but I hope he does it in ignorance: if he knows

what he is doing, he will be a miserable man; for it is a less crime to take a child of God, and cut his throat, and thereby send him to heaven at once, than to turn him out of the way, and to destroy both body and soul. Nevertheless, let us pray for him and them.' So we went to prayer; and when we arose from our knees, I took the Bible, requesting God to speak to me by His word. I opened on Isa. xlix. 19, 'Thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away. Thy children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell. Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been?' At the reading of which words I and all that were in the house were so affected that we burst into weeping; and God gave me one child, in answer to my prayer, that night.

It was soon spread about that Mr. Ingham and Nelson had differed; and many said, 'We shall now see an end of his new religion!' Several of them who once professed to love me as their own lives now became my open enemies, and laboured to draw all from me they could. They said I made my Bible my god! and would take it up in a scornful manner, saying, 'This is John

Nelson's god! Poor man, he hurts himself much by reading in it: it would be better for him if he would let it alone, and abide by his heart.' Then I said, 'Woe is me, that my mother ever bare me, to be a man of strife to all that are about me; but, Lord, I commit my cause to Thee.'

So I went on preaching repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; insisting that those who believed should be careful to maintain good works. But many that once said they might bless God they ever heard me now called me legal, and told me to my face that I never knew the gospel liberty, nor what it was to enjoy the poor-sinnership. I replied, 'I do not desire to know it: I only want to know the perfect and acceptable will of God, and power to do the same.' But they cried out they had nothing to do, for the Lamb had done all for them.

After their next monthly meeting, one who had exhorted came and called me out of my house, saying he wanted to speak with me. I went out; when he told me the Brethren had sent him; and they had the same power as the apostles had—all that withstood them were soon miserable. I answered, 'What do you hobble at in your speech? If you came to tell me that they have given me up into the hands of the devil, speak out, Michael.' He said they had. I replied, 'I hope I shall pray for them as long as I live; but do you go back and tell them I have the devil under my heel, and he can never hurt me so long as I have the grace of God.'

Soon after, I met with another that had got into the poor-sinnership, who held his neck on one side, and talked as if he had been bred up on the borders of Bohemia. He said the Brethren were sorry for me; nay, he heard some of them say that they would take care of my wife and children. I told him I would see my wife and children die on a dunghill before I would sell my soul and the souls of my country-people.

I still kept close to God by prayer and fasting, and was daily refreshed with a sense of His love; He also opened my mouth more and more to speak His word, so that sinners were daily converted.[1] Samuel Mitchell encouraged me much, and went with me almost every night that I went out of town, often four or five miles, after we had done our work; and we used to come back together the same night in all sorts of weather.

One night, after a day of fasting, I dreamed that Mr. John and Mr. Charles Wesley were both sitting by my fireside, and that Mr. John said, 'I will stay but a few days now; for I must go into the North, and return at such a time and stay with you a week.' The next day, when I told it, one said, 'If thou hast dreamed so, they will certainly come.' I replied, 'I no more expect them than I expect the king to come.' But in a few months after they came, and sat in

[1] One who often heard him preach on the week-nights after he had done his work says, 'He usually had his hammer stuck within the string of his leather apron on one side, and his trowel on the other; and after giving out his text he would pull up his small clothes, and begin "My dear brethren."'—LAYCOCK: *Methodist Heroes*, p. 11.

the very posture I dreamed; and Mr. John Wesley spoke the very words.

I was desired once more to go to Gomersal Field-head, to speak with Mr. Ingham. When I got there, David Taylor was with him in the parlour, and spoke kindly to me; but when Mr. Taylor was gone, he began to talk to me about making a division among the Brethren. I told him I did not want to make a division; I wanted the people to be saved. But he said, 'We cannot receive you nor Mr. Wesley into our community, till he publicly declares he has printed false doctrine, and you declare you have preached false.' I said, 'Wherein?' He then burst out into laughter, and said, 'In telling the people that they may live without committing sin.' I replied, 'Do you call that false doctrine?'. He answered, 'I do, I do; and Mr. Wesley has written false doctrine, teaching the same errors.' He quoted some words: then I said, 'They are not Mr. Wesley's, but St. John's words: it is St. John says, "Let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous; and he that committeth sin is of the devil." So, if St. John be right, every one that preacheth contrary to what Mr. Wesley has written here, and what I have preached, is a deceiver and betrayer of souls.' 'If that be your opinion,' said Mr. Ingham, 'we cannot receive you into our church.' I replied, 'I do not want to be one of you; for I am a member of the Church of England.' He answered, 'The Church of England is no church; we are the church.' I said, 'We! Whom do

you mean?' He replied, 'I and the Moravian Brethren.' I said, 'I have no desire to have any fellowship with you or them: it has been better for my soul since I have been wholly separated from you; and God has blessed my labours more since I was told they had delivered me up to Satan than ever before. Therefore I think it is better to have their curse than to have communion with them.' He replied, 'If you think so, I have no more to say to you,' and then turned his back on me.

When I went home, I met with one that had got into the *liberty*; and he told me that the devil had sent me into Yorkshire, to hinder the Brethren from having the country to themselves. I answered, 'If Satan sent me, he is divided against himself; for you know, by my preaching many that were grossly wicked are turned to live a righteous life.' He said, 'No men should be damned but for their own righteousness'; and when I mentioned any scripture, he laughed me to scorn, saying, 'You will never be happy till you leave off those scripture notions, and come to your own heart, and be a poor sinner.'

Now a trial came upon me from another quarter. Some of them came to my house, when I was from home, and talked with my wife, stirring her up against me, so that she was tempted to go to them, and leave me; and the temptation was so strong that she got out of bed three times to go to them. Nay, the more I reasoned with her from Scripture, in ever so loving a manner, the more she was set against me. Then I had none but my

old refuge, to get to God by prayer and fasting; and the Lord took the matter into His own hand, and showed her wherein she had been deceived, and made her a staff in my hand and a support to my soul again.

About this time one of my neighbours that used to hear me preach was going to London, and said, 'I shall be glad to see Mr. John Wesley, whom you call your father in the gospel.' I replied, 'If you will carry a few lines to him from me, you may see and hear him too.' In this letter I desired Mr. Wesley to write to me, and, as he was my father in the gospel, to give me some instructions how to proceed in the work that God had begun by such an unpolished tool as I. When he got to London, he wrote to me that he had seen Mr. Wesley, and gave him the letter; who read it, and asked him some questions about me, and said, 'Do you write by this night's post, and tell him I shall be at his house on Tuesday next, if God permit.' I got the letter on Sunday, and was melted into tears before the Lord.

That day the Lord blessed our souls much, while we were praying that He would conduct His servant safely to us, and bless his coming amongst us; but he was detained on the road, so that it was Wednesday at nine o'clock in the forenoon[1] when he arrived at Birstall. He sent for me to the inn, from whence I conducted him to my house; and he sat down by my fireside, in the very posture I had dreamed about four

[1] May 26, 1742.

months before, and spoke the same words I dreamed he spoke.

Before he went to Newcastle, large companies of those that had left me came to hear him; several of whom said they never heard such a sermon in their lives, nor ever felt so much of the power of God under any man's preaching.

Some said, when Mr. Ingham came first he was often telling of this Mr. Wesley, saying he believed he never talked with him but it was a blessing to his soul, and extolled him above any man that ever they heard him talk of; and now they thought he exceeded all that Mr. Ingham had said about him; but they were greatly surprised that Mr. Ingham could go through Birstall without calling to see Mr. Wesley.

When Mr. Wesley came from Newcastle, their minds were changed; for they did not come to hear him. I asked several of them the reason, and they told me Mr. Ingham declared he preached false doctrine, and it was not safe to hear him.

However, he did not preach in vain; for God blessed his word, and his coming was a great blessing to my soul. I said to him, 'Sir, you may make use of Jacob's words: "The children thou hast begotten in Egypt before are mine"; for I freely deliver them to your care.' After he had spent about a week, he left me: and now they that stayed with me were confirmed in the truth they had received; and many were convinced of the necessity of being born again; so that greater multitudes than ever came to hear, and several were converted.

One Saturday night there came a number of people that were halting between the Germans and me; and as I preached to them, my mouth was almost stopped, and all the time it appeared to me as if I were ploughing upon a rock. Nevertheless, when I had done, and got to the fireside, the people did not offer to go away, but stood as beggars that wanted a morsel of bread. I then took up the Bible, and opened on the prophecy of Isaiah, where it saith, 'I have blotted out thy transgressions as a cloud, and thy sins as a thick cloud: return unto Me; for I have redeemed thee.' And I said, 'Hear ye the word of the Lord!' So I read these words to them as I stood, and began to explain them, when the power of God came as a mighty wind, and many cried out, 'Lord, save, or we perish!' I fell upon my knees, and called upon God to heal the bones that were broken, and to show mercy to the poor and needy; and He heard our cry, so that seven testified that God, for Christ's sake, had blotted out their sins that night; and most of them told me they purposed only to hear me that time and to have gone to the Germans the next day.

Now the people from every quarter flocked to Birstall on the Sabbath; but, as yet, there came only three from Leeds—Mary Shent and two other women.

It was about May when Mr. John Wesley came into Yorkshire, and towards Michaelmas that Mr. Charles Wesley and Mr. Charles Graves came. They stayed a few days, then went on to

Newcastle, with an intent to return in a fortnight ; but the Lord opened such a door in that place that Mr. Wesley stayed some time longer. Mr. Graves came at the time appointed, and the Lord blessed his coming to several souls. I remember he preached one night at Armley, and when he had done, I gave an exhortation ; and the Lord applied the virtue of His precious blood to many souls that night ; and for a whole week together there were some that felt the atoning blood of Jesus Christ.

When Mr. Charles Wesley came back from Newcastle, the Lord was with him in such a manner that the pillars of hell seemed to tremble ; many that were famous for supporting the devil's kingdom fell to the ground while he was preaching, as if they had been thunder-struck. One day he had preached four times ; and one that had been amongst the people all the day said at night twenty-two had received forgiveness of their sins that day.

I think, from the time of Mr. Charles Wesley and Mr. Graves's first coming, and their leaving Yorkshire, after their return from Newcastle, which was about a month, there were added to the true believers near four-score. Then they began to cry out, ' The place is too strait for us : we should have a greater house ! ' So that the words of Isaiah, which I opened on when the Germans bereaved me of my former children, were fulfilled.

About this time William Shent was converted : and there began to be an uproar in Leeds about

his saying he knew his sins forgiven. Some, however, believed his report, and had a desire to hear for themselves; neither could he be content to eat his morsel alone, for his heart panted for the salvation of all his neighbours.

The Christmas following [1742] he desired me to go and preach at Leeds; but when I gave notice of it to the society, they advised me not to go till we had kept a day of fasting and prayer. So we humbled ourselves before the Lord on the Friday, and on Sunday night I went to Leeds, several of the brethren accompanying me. As we were going over the bridge, we met two men, who said to me, 'If you attempt to preach in Leeds, you need not expect to come out again alive; for there is a company of men that swear they will kill you.' I answered, 'They must ask my Father's leave; for if He have any more work for me to do, all the men in the town cannot kill me till I have done it.'

When we got to brother Shent's, he had provided a large empty house to preach in, and it was well filled with people. As soon as I got upon the stairs, I felt an awful sense of God rest upon me; and the people behaved as people that feared God, and received the word with meekness.[1]

Now the Armley society became a nursing mother to the new-born souls at Leeds; for there

[1] For a graphic account of Nelson's visit to Skircoat Green, near Halifax, where he preached in the open air, 'with a washing-tub, mouth downwards, for a standing-place,' see Walker's *Methodism in Halifax*, pp. 26–7.

were several steady souls at Armley, who had stood from the beginning without wavering; and I trust we shall meet together in heaven.

Some time after we had begun at Leeds, Mr. John Bennet, from Chinley, in Derbyshire, came to our town, and sent for me to the inn. I did not know him; but by his dress I took him to be a preacher. I said, 'I do not know you: pray what is your name?' He told me. I asked him if he came from Mr. Wesley; he said, No. He was not in connexion with him, he was in fellowship with the Moravian Brethren; but he had had a great opinion of Mr. Wesley for some time, till he saw a little pamphlet which Mr. Wesley had lately published, which he styles *The Character of a Methodist*,[1] and it turned his mind. I asked, 'Sir, what do you find wrong there?' He replied, 'There is too much perfection in it for me.' I answered, 'Then you think a less degree of holiness will fit you for heaven than what is mentioned there: pray what are the words you stumble at?' On his telling me, I said, 'They are the words of St. John.' But he said, 'We know by experience that there is no such thing to be attained in this life.' I replied, 'If your experience does not answer to what St. Paul and St. John speak, I shall not regard it'; and when I mentioned some passages of Scripture, he did not believe that what I said was Scripture. I pulled out my Bible, and showed him the words; and when he

[1] Published in 1742; reprinted in the collected *Works*, vol. vii. p. 339.

had read them, his countenance changed, and he cavilled no more.

When we met again, we seemed to be of one heart and judgement; for God revealed His will to him soon after he had parted with me, and made him an instrument to turn many to righteousness, and to bring me and my brethren to preach in Lancashire, Cheshire, and Derbyshire.

The first time I went, he met me at Marsden, to conduct me into Cheshire; but as I went over a great common, a little behind Huddersfield, a dog leaped out of the heath, and came and smelled at my leg, and walked by my side for near a mile: he then went to the houses that were a little out of the way, and bit several dogs, and came running after me again, and walked by my side till he saw another house, where he fought with a dog; then followed me again. Thus he went on for about five miles, and went with me into the inn at Marsden, when he sat down by my side. There were several men in the house, whom I asked if any of them knew whose dog that was; but none of them could tell. I said, 'I think he is mad'; but they laughed me to scorn. Soon after another dog came in, and he went and bit him directly, and ran out, and bit four more; and then the men pursued and killed him. When I saw that God had kept me in such imminent danger, I was greatly humbled before Him.

As Mr. Bennet and I went over to Stanedge, we met David Taylor, who had got so much into the poor-sinnership that he would scarcely speak

to me. He called Mr. Bennet to a distance, and said he was sorry that he was going to take me into Derbyshire; for I was so full of law and reason that I should do a great deal of hurt wherever I preached.

I preached twice that afternoon; once at Hopkinpit, in Lancashire, and the other time at Woodley, in Cheshire. It was given out, unknown to me, for me to preach at Manchester Cross on the Sunday in the afternoon. About ten people went with me from Mr. Lackwood's to Manchester. When we arrived there, I do not know but there might be two thousand people gathered together at the Cross; and most of them behaved well. But when I was in the middle of my discourse, one at the outside of the congregation threw a stone, which cut me on the head; however, that made the people give greater attention, especially when they saw the blood run down my face; so that all was quiet till I had done, and was singing a hymn. Then the constable and his deputy came and seized me and Mr. Bennet, and said, 'You must go before the justice.' I asked, 'By what order?' He held up his staff, saying that was his warrant, and he would make me go. I answered, 'I will not resist; for if I have done anything contrary to the law, I ought to suffer by the law.' He said I should suffer for what I had done. Then he began to strike the people that crowded about us. As soon as he and his deputy could get through the multitude, they outran us: when I called and said, 'Stay, gentlemen; for we cannot get through the people

as fast as you.' But the people crowded about us in such a manner that we saw the constable no more. Afterwards we rode to Jonathan Holmes's. That night we had a blessed meeting; and the Lord was much with us all the time I stayed in those places.

Soon after, Mr. John Wesley came into Yorkshire again; and the Lord blessed his coming to many souls.[1] When he set out for Newcastle, he desired me to go to Grimsby, in Lincolnshire,[2] and to spend a few days there, among some people that had once run well, but were turned out of the way by one that had come down from London, who had got into the poor-sinnership, and was made free from the righteous law of God, and from all ordinances and good works. He brought many of them into his own liberty; so that they sold their Prayer-Books, left off reading and praying, and followed the motions of their own minds, which they called the Lamb in their hearts. But one or two remained under the law, as they called it; that is, they still continued to read the Bible, and durst not leave off prayer, nor any other ordinance that Christ had appointed. These came to Epworth to seek the pure gospel; and when they heard Mr. Wesley, they said 'his word was as sweet wine to a thirsty soul.'

I set out with a great sense of my own weakness, and was ready to turn back: then I opened my Bible where these words were written, 'I was

[1] See Wesley's *Journal*, Jan. 3, 1743.

[2] Wesley had been asked to go by William Blow, a cordwainer but not being able, sent Nelson instead.

afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the ground.' I cried out, 'Lord, give me strength and understanding for the work, if Thou hast called me to it.' I opened my book again, on Isa. xiv. 1, 'The Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them.' That night I came to Epworth, and preached to a large congregation.

Next morning I and a man that belonged to Grimsby, and a boy about twelve years of age, set out on foot for Grimsby; but night came upon us when we were five miles short of it, and, there being no public-house near, we went to several farm-houses to ask for lodging, but could get none. Then we went to a poor house, where I prevailed with the people to let the boy lie with two of their own boys; and I said to the man, 'Let us go and seek a bed somewhere else, or a stable to lie in.' As we went on in the dark, we saw a light at a small distance, and we went over a field to it. I knocked at the door, and they bade us come in: there were four men, three women, and two boys, sitting by the fire. As soon as I entered, I said, 'Peace be to this house'; at which words the people started up as if I had thrown fire at them. I said, 'We are two wayfaring men; and if you will entertain us for a night, we will satisfy you.' They got us a good supper, and made up a good bed. I talked to them about the way of salvation, and went to prayer with them; and they were so affected that the master and the mistress talked to me two

hours after we were in bed. The next morning, after breakfast, I went to pay the woman; but she said her husband charged her to take nothing, but, on the contrary, to give us some money to support us on the road; but I replied, 'Not one farthing will we have; and if you will not take our money, I pray God reward you with everlasting consolation!'

We then went where we had left the boy, and paid the people for him, and set out for Grimsby, which we reached by ten o'clock. The people soon heard that I was come, and flocked to me directly, when I prayed with them, and began to exhort; but many of them despised my words, saying I was too legal for them. I then took up my Bible, and said, 'Hear ye the word of the Lord!' So I read two or three verses, and bade them try themselves by that standard; then I read in another place, and said, 'If you will compare your consciences with these scriptures, you may see what state your souls are in.' One woman turned pale, and began to tremble, saying, 'I clearly see we are deluded, and that what we called the Lamb in our hearts is nothing but the devil.' Then she cried out, 'Alas! alas! what must we do?' We went to prayer again, and God made the kingdom of Satan to shake once more in that place.

The second night a schoolmaster sent me word that he would give me leave to preach in his school, which would hold several hundreds of people; but those that had fallen into the poor-sinnership told me, if I did, they durst not go to hear me;

for they should be mobbed, and I should be killed. I said, 'As the gentleman has made me the offer, I will accept it, and, by the grace of God, will preach if there were as many devils in it as there are tiles on it.' Accordingly I went, and it was well filled from side to side, and the people behaved well; I found great liberty in speaking; and when I had done, several cried out, 'This is the way of salvation!'

When I came back to brother Blow's, those that had been shorn of their strength confessed their fearfulness, and said, 'While we continued in the spirit in which we were converted, we were as bold as lions. Oh what shall we do to recover our strength?' I told them to humble themselves before the Lord with prayer and fasting, and He would snatch them out of the snare of the devil, and give them back their first love.[1]

I preached again the next morning, and set out for Epworth. In my way I stopped at Ferry, where I preached at four in the afternoon, and got into Epworth by seven that evening.

When I came there, so large a company were gathered together that I could not get into the house, nor yet one-third of the people, though it was dark and snowed. However, I desired them to hand me out a chair: so I stood up in the snow, and preached, and they behaved as well as ever I knew a congregation in my life; and it appeared that God blessed His word to many souls that night.

[1] A Methodist society was formed as a result of this visit. See Lester's *Grimsby Methodism*, p. 20.

When I returned home, I found God had opened the mouth of Jonathan Reeves, and blessed his word to numbers about Birstall; and we laboured together for some time, till I returned into Mr. Bennet's circuit.

I went into the Peak to preach at Monyash, when a clergyman, with a great company of men that worked in the lead-mines, all being in liquor, came in just as I began to give out the hymn. As soon as we began to sing, he began to halloo and shout, as if he were hunting with a pack of hounds, and so continued all the time we sang. When I began to pray, he attempted to overturn the chair that I stood on; but he could not, although he struck so violently with his foot that he broke one of the arms of the chair quite off. When I began to preach, he called on his companions to pull me down; but they replied, 'No, sir; the man says nothing but the truth. Pray, hold your peace, and let us hear what he has to say.' He then came to me himself, took me by the collar of my shirt, and pulled me down; then he tore down my coat cuffs, and attempted to tear it down the back; then took me by the collar, and shook me. I said, 'Sir, you and I must shortly appear at the bar of God, to give an account of this night's work.' He replied, 'What! must you and I appear before God's bar together?' I said, 'As sure as we look one another in the face now.' He let go my throat, took my Bible out of my hand, and, turning it over and over, said, 'It is a right Bible; and if you preach by the Spirit of God,

let me hear you preach from this text'; which was, 'Wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than ten mighty men in the city.' I got up, and began to preach from this text; and when any offered to make a noise, the miners said, 'Hold your peace, or we will make you; and let us hear what he will make of the parson's text.' As I went on, the parson said, 'That is right; that is true.' After a while he looked round, and saw many in tears; then he looked at me, and went away, leaving me to finish my discourse in peace. All the rest of the circuit I had peaceable meetings; and the Lord kept still adding to the number of His children.

At my return home, I began to preach in the open street, at brother Shent's door, in Leeds, and great companies flocked to hear me. The first time I stood up in the street, I was struck on the head with an egg and two potatoes; but that neither hindered me from speaking nor the multitude from hearing. I heard that several serious people, as soon as I had done, went to an old clergyman to ask his advice about the doctrine I had preached, and told him as much of my sermon as they could. He answered he hoped no one had disturbed me for preaching that doctrine; and on being told that some had thrown potatoes at me, and spoiled my wig and coat with a rotten egg, he said he would rather lose his arm than throw at a man for preaching such doctrine, for that was the marrow of the gospel. Many lost their prejudice by his word, and embraced the truth with joy; so that I

preached in the streets at Leeds every other Sunday morning, with very little disturbance.

After some time, I went into Lincolnshire again; and the congregation was so large at Grimsby that I was obliged to stand upon a table at brother Blow's back-door for several days together. As I was preaching, the minister and three men came to play at quoits as near the people as they could get; but with all their playing and shouting they could not draw any one from hearing.

Some friends from Tetney and Cleethorpes prevailed with me to go to a shepherd's house near the sea-coast. There was a large company gathered together in that desert, and I opened my book on Gal. i. 3: 'Grace be unto you, and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.' I felt much of the Lord's presence, and the power of God was so great among us that the people fell flat on their faces, or kneeled down on their knees, so that there was not one left standing, and their cry was so great that my voice could not be heard; then I fell on my knees, and called upon the Lord to heal the bones that were broken; and I believe many will praise God for that meeting to all eternity.

On my return to Epworth, I was desired to go by Hainton, and several from Grimsby went with me. When we got there, William Fenwick[1]

[1] See Wesley's *Journal*, April 19, 1745.

told me there was a company of men at the bowling-green, who had made themselves almost drunk on purpose to kill me. I answered that God was my defence, and I believed He would deliver me from them all. As soon as they heard I was come, they all left the bowls, and came to William Fenwick's, many of them with sticks, about two feet long, and as thick as a man's wrist: some of them began to sing a psalm, and others to curse and swear; but I reproved them, and they had no power to meddle with me. At the appointed hour I went into the street, and spoke to them in the name of the Lord; and God put a bridle in the jaws of the wicked, so that they stood patiently to hear, while I was reasoning with them about the necessity of being made holy here, that we may not be damned eternally. A lusty, red-faced gentlewoman exclaimed aloud, 'I am a Papist, and believe I shall be cleansed in purgatory.' When I had done, I said, 'I appeal to all your consciences that I have not spoken my own words, but the words of the Lord.' A gentleman answered, 'We allow all you say is true; yet you deserve to be set in the stocks for delivering it in the street.'

As I went into the house, one hit me with an egg on my head, and the people crowded so fast into the house that I could scarcely turn myself. At last, I got to sit upon a dresser, and spoke to them for an hour, and God began to work on several of them; but as soon as they began to tremble, and cry out, 'Lord, save, or we

perish,' others made all the haste they could to get out of the house. When I got to Epworth, I found the people much in earnest, and my own soul was greatly blessed in speaking to them.

After I had laboured in Yorkshire awhile longer, Mr. John Wesley sent for me to London.[1] But by this time I had almost worn out my clothes, and I did not know where the next should come from; my wife said I was not fit to go anywhere as I was. I answered, 'I have worn them out in the Lord's work, and He will not let me want long.' Two days after, a tradesman in our parish, that did not belong to our society, came to my house, and brought me a piece of blue cloth for a coat, and a piece of black cloth for a waistcoat and breeches; so I see the Lord is mindful of them that trust in Him.

As soon as I well could, I set out for London on foot; but one of my neighbours was going, and he took my place, and let me ride sometimes. I preached at Nottingham Cross as I went.

I stayed a few days at London; then Mr. Richards and I set out for Oxford. We both preached at High Wycombe as we went.

When we came to Oxford, we met three young gentlemen in their gowns in the street; but I think I never heard a soldier or sailor swear worse than they did. Mr. Richards, being first, and a collegian himself,[2] said, 'Gentlemen, I am

[1] See Charles Wesley's *Journal*, Aug. 12, 1743. A conference with the Moravians had been arranged, but they did not come.

[2] He was afterwards a teacher of languages at Kingswood School.

ashamed to hear you: it is a sad thing that you should come here to learn to be guides to others in the way to heaven, and continue to go in the way to destruction yourselves!' One of them said, with a curse, 'What, are you a Presbyterian?' When I spoke, another of them said, 'These chaps belong to poor Wesley': so they went away.

We spent a Sabbath at Oxford; and some of the collegians behaved very rudely as I was preaching in the evening; but the Lord put His hook in their jaws, and kept them from doing any harm to the people, or hindering me in my discourse.

The next day we got to Cirencester, where we stayed two nights. One of the brethren then went with us to Bristol. On all this journey we had but one horse between Mr. Richards and me.

After tarrying a few days at Bristol, and preaching once at Bath, Mr. Wesley, Mr. Downes, and I set out for Cornwall.[1] Mr. Downes and I had but one horse; so we rode by turns. Mr. Wesley preached at Taunton Cross and Exeter Castle, as we went. We generally set out before Mr. Wesley and Mr. Shepherd.

One day, having travelled twenty miles without baiting, we came to a village, and inquired for an inn; but the people told us there was none in the town, nor any on our road within twelve Cornish

[1] See Wesley's *Journal*, Aug. 29–Sept. 21, 1743, for this Cornwall visit. Nelson, together with Mr. Shepherd, accompanied Wesley on his visit to the Scilly Isles, 'to publish the love of God our Saviour,' on Sept. 13.

miles: then I said, 'Come, brother Downes, we must live by faith.' When we had stood awhile, I said, 'Let us go to yonder house, where the stone porch is, and ask for something': so we did, and the woman said, 'We have bread, butter, and milk, and good hay for your horse.' When we had refreshed ourselves, I gave the woman a shilling; but she said she did not desire anything. I said, 'I insist upon it.'[1]

We got to Bodmin that night; but it was late before Mr. Wesley and Mr. Shepherd arrived, having lost the path on the twelve-mile common, and found the way again by the sound of the bells. The next day we got to Gwennap, and the day after to St. Ives. The following day I worked at my own business, and continued to work for several days.

When I had done my job of work, I went to St. Just, and preached at the cross to a large company of well-behaved people. Then I went to the Land's End, and preached the same evening. Next morning, which was Sunday, I came to Morvah church: after service, I preached there, and in the evening at Zennor.

When I had been out a week, I returned to St. Ives, and found brother Downes in a fever, so that he was not able to preach at all. All that time Mr. Wesley and I lay on the floor: he had my great-coat for his pillow, and I had Burkitt's *Notes on the New Testament* for mine. After

[1] *The Methodist Magazine*, April, 1809, gives an account of these friends, Digory and Elizabeth Isbell. They were converted under Nelson's sermon, and became useful Methodists.

being here near three weeks, one morning, about three o'clock, Mr. Wesley turned over, and, finding me awake, clapped me on the side saying, 'Brother Nelson, let us be of good cheer: I have one whole side yet, for the skin is off but on one side.' We usually preached on the commons, going from one common to another, and it was but seldom any one asked us to eat and drink.

One day we had been at St. Hilary Downs, and Mr. Wesley had preached from Ezekiel's vision of dry bones, and there was a shaking among the people as he preached. As we returned, Mr. Wesley stopped his horse to pick the blackberries, saying, 'Brother Nelson, we ought to be thankful that there are plenty of blackberries; for this is the best country I ever saw for getting a stomach, but the worst that ever I saw for getting food. Do the people think we can live by preaching?' I said, 'I know not what they may think; but one asked me to eat something as I came from St. Just, when I ate heartily of barley-bread and honey.' He said, 'You are well off: I had a thought of begging a crust of bread of the woman where I met the people at Morvah, but forgot it till I had got some distance from the house.'

One Sunday, having been at the Land's End in the morning, and at Morvah at noon, I came to Zennor to preach at night, and got there before the afternoon service began. In the sermon the minister said, 'Here is a people who hold that damnable Popish doctrine of justification by faith; therefore I beg you not to hear them.' After the service was over, I went about two

hundred yards from the church, and got upon a rock, where I began to sing a hymn; and I believe the whole congregation came to hear me. According to the light I had, I showed what was the faith of the gospel, and what the faith of the Church of Rome.

I stayed a fortnight after Mr. Wesley was gone, and I found my soul was much blessed among the people. When Mr. Wesley arrived at Bristol, he wrote to me, and desired me to call at three different places to preach in my way to Bristol.

When I left Captain Hitchin's, I was benighted on the twelve-mile common, and was wet to the skin; but, by the providence of God, I came to the house where I had called in going down. I knocked at the door, and the woman knew my voice, and said, 'The Lord bless you! Come in.' As soon as I went into the house, they pulled off my wet clothes, and put me on dry ones, and got me something warm for supper; they took my wet clothes out of my bags, which they rinsed, dried, and ironed. We sang a hymn, went to prayer, and I gave them an exhortation that night. The next morning the man rose up, and alarmed that and another village; so that by seven o'clock I had about three hundred to preach to, who all seemed to receive the word with joy. I heard soon afterward that the man and his wife who received us had received the Lord that sent us.

The next night I came to Sticklepath, and preached to a large congregation in a field. As I was speaking, a woman, who had been brought

up a Quaker, began to tremble, and in a little time sunk down upon the grass, and lay till I had done. Then they brought her to Mrs. Bridgood's, where I was; and I prayed with her. Although most of the company were Quakers, yet they desired me to sing, and read several of our hymns.

The next morning, before I began to preach, the woman that fell down, with two more, came into the room where I was: she said, 'I had no rest in the night, the anguish of my soul was so great: and I desire thee to pray with me.' We went to prayer; and when we rose up, she said, 'O praise the Lord! for to-day is the day of Pentecost with me.'

After I had done preaching, an exciseman, who came from Crockernwell, told me that it was given out for me to preach there at ten o'clock that forenoon, and he was to conduct me. So we set out directly. I preached in an orchard. Among the rest of the people were a clergyman and his wife. All behaved well.

Almost as soon as I alighted at the Oxford Inn, in Exeter, a man came to conduct me to the place where I was to preach. There was a clergyman in the next room, who soon came into the room where I was, and asked me how the two Mr. Wesleys did, and insisted upon my supping with him. I told him I must go to preach first. He said he would go with me; which he did. As I was preaching, the clerk of the parish fell down, and after him another man and woman: they did not cry out, but lay groaning for mercy. After I had done, and

the greater part of the people were gone, I went to prayer with them that were in distress.

As we went back to the inn, the clergyman said, 'I dare not pray as you did to-night: you prayed that God would give you some fruit in that place, as He had done in others. I have been a preacher for many years, and I cannot say that I have had any fruit—that any one has been converted by my preaching in all my life.' I replied, 'If you be not converted yourself, and have not a greater commission than man can give you, you may preach all your days, and never convert one soul.'

When we were at supper, he asked me how Mr. Wesley went on; and when he heard how he lived, and how he was treated by wicked men, he said, 'If that be the way to heaven, I think I shall never get there: my flesh is not brass, nor my bones iron.' I replied, 'You do not know what you can bear till you come to be tried.' He said, 'Well, I believe Mr. Wesley is the greatest man in the kingdom; but I think he uses too much austerity.' We talked till eleven o'clock, then parted in love. I saw him no more, but have heard since that he receives Mr. Wesley to preach in his church, and that God has made him an instrument of converting sinners.

I preached the next morning, and then set out for Axminster, where I preached in the open street, at three in the afternoon, to a well-behaved people, though it was the second day of the fair.

The next day I went to Thorngrove, near Middlezoy. That night God blessed His word to

many, as appeared afterwards. One gentlewoman was convinced that night, who four years after sent my wife four guineas, which came in good time; for she had borrowed four guineas of a neighbour to buy a cow, and the time for payment was come, and she had not money to pay.

When I got to Bristol, I found my soul much blessed among the people; and in those ten days there were several that found the Lord.

In my return home, I preached at Stroud and several other places[1] in my way to Wednesbury, whither I came not long after the people had been mobbed in such a cruel manner. I preached in an open yard to very large congregations of people, several times. Some of the mobbers came to hear me, but all behaved well: so He who stops the raging of the sea can stay the madness of the people.

After spending a few days there, I set out for Nottingham, and stayed there two days. I preached at the Malt-cross on the Sabbath, to a large congregation, in great peace; but Monday being a rejoicing day, they had bonfires in the market-place, and some came with squibs to disturb me as I was preaching. One of them threw a squib on fire close to my heels, but a woman kicked it away: the man caught it up again to throw at me, but it burst in his hand, and he went away shaking his head. Another came on the low side of the cross with a design to throw one in my

[1] Charles Wesley's *Journal*, Oct. 26, 1743: 'I rode on to Evesham, and found John Nelson preaching. I confirmed his word, and prayed in the Spirit.'

face; but I did not turn my face that way so soon as he expected, and the squib burst in his hand. As soon as I had done, a sergeant of the army came to me, with tears in his eyes, and said, 'In the presence of God, and all this people, I beg your pardon: for I came on purpose to mob you; but when I could get no one to assist me, I stood to hear you, and am convinced of the deplorable state my soul is in, and I believe you are a servant of the living God.' He then embraced me, and went away weeping.

When I got home, I found my wife much better, though never likely to recover her former strength; owing to the persecution she met with at Wakefield, when Mr. Larwood[1] was mobbed there. After they had abused him, she, with some women, set out for Birstall; a mob followed them into the fields: when they overtook them, she turned about and spake to them, upon which all the men returned without touching them; but the women followed them till they came to a gate, where they stopped them; they damned her, saying, 'You are Nelson's wife, and here you shall die.' They saw she was big with child, yet beat her on the body so cruelly that they killed the child in her womb, and she went home and miscarried directly. This treatment she had reason to remember to her life's end; but God more than made it up to her, by filling her with peace and love.

There had been some disturbance at Leeds; and I was the first that stood up after, at brother

[1] See Wesley's *Journal*, Nov. 5, 1755.

Shent's door. A number of men had protested they would pull down the first man that attempted to preach there. But if the fear of God could not restrain them, the fear of the magistrates did; so that they did not meddle with me: only some boys threw about a peck of turnips at me, but not one of them hit me. That was a blessed morning to many souls: two, that had been enemies, were struck to the ground, and cried out for the disquietude of their souls. I preached often afterwards, with little disturbance, and believers were multiplied in Leeds.

After I had stayed a few months in Yorkshire, I went a third time into Lincolnshire. At Epworth we had peaceable and blessed meetings. But when I came to Grimsby, the minister[1] got a man to beat the town drum through the town, and went before the drum, and gathered all the rabble he could, giving them liquor to go with him to fight for the Church. When they came to Mr. Blow's door, they set up three huzzas, and the parson cried out, 'Pull down the house! pull down the house!' But no one offered to touch the house till I had done preaching. Then they broke the windows, till they had not left one whole square about the house; and as the people went out they abused them, till some of the mob began to fight their fellows for abusing the women; so that most of the people got away while they were fighting one with another. Not long after, the minister gathered them together again, and gave them more drink: then they

[1] The Rev. Samuel Prince, vicar.

came and broke the stanchions of the windows, pulled up the paving in the streets, which they threw in at the windows, and broke the household goods in pieces; the parson crying out, 'If they will not turn out the villain, that we may put him in the black ditch, pull down the house.'

While they were drumming, cursing and swearing, fighting and breaking the goods, one of their neighbours, who was not a hearer, went to an alderman, and said, 'Some order must be taken with these men; for, if they be suffered to go on as they do, they will ruin William Blow, and I fear they will kill somebody.' But the good alderman said he would do nothing but lend them his mash-tub to pump the preacher in. Then the mob fell out again one with another, and dispersed, after labouring from seven till almost twelve at night. The parson said to the drummer, 'I will reward you for your pains: but be sure to come at five in the morning; for the villain will be preaching again then.' So the drummer did, and began to beat just as I was going to give out the hymn. When he had beat for near three quarters of an hour, and saw it did not disturb us, he laid down his drum, and stood to hear for himself; and the tears presently ran down his cheeks. When I had ended, he expressed great sorrow for what he had done to disturb us. As he and some others went up the town, the parson met them, and bade them to be sure to come at seven o'clock. He said, 'No, sir; I will never beat a drum to disturb yonder people any more, while breath is in my body.' So that we had great

peace in our shattered house that night, and God's presence amongst us.

The next day I went to Hainton ; and when I had done preaching, a grave, elderly gentleman came to me, and said, ' Your doctrine is sound, but it would far better become a church.' I answered, ' Sir, if a man were hungry in the midst of a desert, and wholesome food were brought him, he would not refuse to eat because he was not in the dining-room.' He replied, ' You are right, you are right. I thank you kindly, and wish you well, and that much good may be done by you wheresoever you preach ; for good food is good wherever it is eaten.'

When I got to Epworth, I was told the clerk was drunk, and had been swearing he would pull down the preacher, and take him to such an ale-house, where the curate and some other men were drinking. In the evening, as I was preaching, he came staggering, and rushed in among the people, crying, ' Stand out of the way ; for I must have the preacher : he must go before my master, that is in such an ale-house.' One asked him where his warrant was : he said he had none, but his master had sent him, and he would make me go with him. The people bade him hold his peace, or get about his business ; and when he began to be rude, one took him up in his arms, and laid him down upon a dunghill, and there left him.

After I got home, it was much impressed upon me that some trial was coming upon me ; and several times when I was preaching, I have said, ' There is a cloud gathering, and it will burst over

my head. Oh pray for me!' After this, I stayed some time in Yorkshire, and sinners were daily turning from their evil ways; so that several ale-house keepers cursed me to my face, and told me I ought to be transported, for I preached so much hell and damnation, that I terrified the people so, that they durst not spend sixpence with a neighbour.

Some time after I met a gentleman, as I was riding to Leeds, who said something about the weather. I answered, 'The Lord orders all things well.' He presently said, 'I know you, for I have heard you preach; but I do not like you: you lay a wrong foundation for salvation. Do you think that the blood of another man will save me?' I replied, 'St. Paul saith, "Other foundation can no man lay but Christ Jesus"; but you say that is a wrong foundation. Upon what terms do you expect to be saved?' He said, 'By good works.' I answered, 'You will be the first that got to heaven that way. But, suppose you could, what would you do when you came there?' He said, 'What do others do there?' I answered, 'They sing, "Glory to God that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever, that was slain, and hath redeemed us by His blood!" But your song will be, "Glory be to myself; for I have quickened my own soul, and qualified myself for heaven!" O sir, what a scandalous song will you have to sing! It will make discord in heaven.' He turned pale, and said nothing for some time. When he had rode awhile, he said, 'All the Lord requires of us is

to do justly, to love mercy, and walk humbly with God.' I answered, 'Do you expect to stand or fall by that scripture?' He said, 'I do.' 'Then,' I replied, 'you are lost for ever, if you are to go to heaven for doing justly, for loving mercy, and walking humbly with God. I appeal to your conscience, if you have not come short in every one of these duties. Have you dealt with every man as you would have him do to you, in all circumstances, ever since you knew good from evil? Suppose you had, have you dealt justly with God, and employed every talent that He has committed to your charge to His glory —both time, wisdom, and learning; house, land, wealth, and trade? If you have used any one talent, and not to the glory of God, you have robbed Him.' Then I spoke to the other two. He said, 'There is repentance.' But I replied, 'Not for you; for you are to be saved for doing justly, for loving mercy, and walking humbly with God: if you come short of these duties, you must be damned.' He said, 'Lord have mercy on me! you are enough to make any man despair.' 'Yes,' I said, 'of saving himself, that he may come to Jesus Christ, and be saved.' He argued no more; but heard me patiently, and parted friendly.

One Sunday I was at chapel, where the minister laboured much to persuade the people that there was no such thing as the forgiveness of sins in this world. When he had done, he sent the clerk to desire me to call upon him. I did so, and he told me he understood I was he that went about to

delude the people, telling them they might know their sins forgiven in this world; and there is no such thing. He said he did not know his own sins were forgiven, and he had talked with several learned divines, and there was not one of them that did; and several believed they must never know it till the day of judgement. I answered, 'Sir, what will become of their souls till then? will they lie in heaven or hell?' He said it was an unfair question. I replied, 'Sir, if what you say be true, every time we use the Church prayers we offer the sacrifice of fools, and mock God to His face: for this day, you and all the congregation, in my presence, prayed that God would forgive you all your sins, negligences, and ignorances; and you affirmed, in the presence of God, that He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe the gospel. If He do not, you are a false witness, and a deceiver of the people; yea, and a contemner of the word of God; for St. Peter saith, "To Him give all the prophets witness, that whosoever believeth in Him doth receive forgiveness of their sins." And St. Paul saith, "By Him all that believe are justified from all things." He doth not say they shall be justified at the day of judgement, but "all that believe are justified." And St. John saith, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for His name's sake."' He replied, 'You take some part of Scripture.' I answered, 'I leave all the rest to you to contradict me, if you can. For this day you have denied the faith of the

Church you call yourself a minister of; as she saith, " Before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of His Holy Spirit, no good work can be done." But you say there is no such thing as inspiration to be expected in this age. And yet you pray that God would cleanse the thoughts of your heart by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit ! ' Then he said, ' You have too good a memory for me. Landlady, bring us a pint of ale.' So I left him.

One man in our town that had run well for a season, but had turned from us, and was become a happy sinner, now invited the Germans to preach at his house. One of their chief preachers came, and said (after preaching), they had been asking their Saviour about preaching in Birstall; and the Lamb had made it plain to them the time was come that they should have a church in Birstall: which when one came and told me, I said, ' God hath showed me to the contrary; and you may go and tell the preacher that the lamb who told them so is a liar.' They came several weeks together, but to no purpose. Then the preacher said, ' It is not the Lamb's will that they should come any more.' When they told me, I replied, ' Their lamb is much given to change: he hath not continued in one mind for three months.'

After this, as I was going to Staincliffe to work at my business, about five in the morning, I met with a Dissenting minister. He stopped me, and said, ' John, you go often this way. I would have you come and spend an hour with us; for

I want to talk with you.' I answered, 'I have not an hour to spare; for I go to my work at five in the morning, and work till six at night: then I have always somewhere to go and preach; so that I have scarcely time to read a chapter in the Bible, but at my dinner-hour; and sometimes I have to preach in that hour.' He said, 'What do you mean by redemption? Do you mean that Christ hath died for all?' I replied, 'I do believe He did, or He cannot judge all: for Truth itself cannot condemn any man because he will not believe a lie.' He said, 'What do you mean?' I answered, 'Every man is bound to believe that by nature he is a child of wrath, and by wilful sin an heir of hell; and that while he was in that lost condition, the eternal Son of God, for his sake, took upon Him our nature; and did in that nature fulfil all righteousness for him, and, at last, gave His soul an offering for sin: he must consciously believe that the Lord Jesus Christ loved him, and gave Himself for him, or he must be damned eternally. And if the Lord did not give Himself for him, he must be damned because he does not believe a lie. But you know it is said, "He, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man; and He gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due season." And St. John saith, "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." Sir, there are numberless scriptures that say He did die for all; but show me one that saith He did not die for all.' He answered, 'If He died for all, why are not all

saved?' I replied, 'Let the Lord answer for Himself: "Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life."' He then said, 'You say, "It is of him that willeth."' I answered, 'It is Christ that saith, "Ye will not come unto Me." Do not pretend to be wiser than the Lord that made you. You say you will have no *ifs*; but I say, if you give the promise without the condition, God will take your name out of the book of life. I hope you will weigh these things. I shall be glad to converse with you at some other opportunity; for my time is now expired.'

Almost every day some came to dispute with me as I was at work. And I saw every day more clearly that he who insists on men being saved from their sins by Christ in this world is like a speckled bird, for all sects and parties that have not the life of Christ in them to mock at.

One day, two Quakers fell upon me very hotly, and told me I was carnal, or else I should not make use of carnal ordinances, not seeking the living among the dead. I told them those ordinances they called carnal I knew to be spiritual; for God had refreshed my soul in the use of them by His Spirit. 'You say I seek the living among the dead: but I do not; for I have found the Lord of life in the great congregation. But if I would leave the Church, where must I go to find a people that are truly alive to God?' They told me, if I were right, I should come to them; for they were the only people that had spiritual worship amongst them. They talked much about George Fox and William Penn, and said,

'What thinkest thou of them?' I answered, 'I think well of them; but their graces will profit you nothing, except the same change be wrought in your hearts as was in them. Neither do I see that you are God's people any more than those who go to church; for the Lord has set a mark upon His children, and it will rest on them as long as the world endureth.' They asked, 'What is that mark?' I replied, 'They are hated of all men that know not God. For they who live after the Spirit must be persecuted by those that live after the flesh. I do not see that this is your case, any more than that of those who go to church. Your forefathers had that spot of God's children; but you have lost it as much as the Church.' Then one of them turned pale, and said, 'Do you believe that God hath no people in the land but the Methodists?' I replied, 'I did not say so.' He said, 'They are the only people that are persecuted now.' They then went away, seemingly much discontented.

As I was passing through part of Lancashire, I found the Lord reviving His work among the people. After I had done preaching at our place, a man and his wife came to me, both in tears, and desired me to pray with them. I did so. When I had done, I was exhorting them to abstain from evil, and to continue in prayer, and told them God would show mercy unto them, for the obedience and blood-shedding of His dear Son. Presently a Dissenter broke out, and said, 'You are deceiving the people, and setting them to lean on a broken reed, by telling them that another man's

obedience and blood would atone for their sins.' I asked him how he could stand before that God who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, if there were no merit in the blood of Christ to atone for his sins? He said, 'Man hath such noble faculties that, if he improve them, he will thereby qualify himself for heaven; but you degrade man's nature in your preaching, and set him on a level with the brute beasts.' I said, 'Did I so?' He replied, 'Yes, you did; for I heard you myself.' I replied, 'Then, sir, you heard me preach false doctrine; for if I set a natural man upon a level with the beasts, I set him greatly out of his place. I believe he is far worse; for he has not only all the faculties of the beast, which are lust and earthly-mindedness, but the nature of the devil, wrath, pride, malice, and ambition. He is therefore three degrees worse than a beast, till he is created anew in Christ Jesus; so that, if I ranked him with the beasts, I set him above his place.' Then he burst out into anger; but I said, 'Sir, make use of that reason you speak of, and let me see you save yourself from anger.' At which he was ready to strike me; and went away, leaving me, as he said, 'in my stupid condition.'

When I got about ten miles farther into the country, another Dissenter came into the house where I was at prayer with a poor man. When I had done, I exhorted him not to rest till he was sure that the Lord Jesus had loved him, and washed him from his sins in His own blood. At which words the Dissenter spoke out, saying, 'I

hate to hear people talk of being assured of any such thing, or of perfection in this world.' I replied, 'Is the Lord of life able to do what He came from heaven to do?' He said, 'What is that?' I answered, 'To destroy the works of the devil, to make an end of sin, and to bring in an everlasting righteousness.' He said, 'Shall you make me believe that any man can live without committing sin?' I answered, 'I cannot tell whether I can make you believe it or not; but this I can tell you, by the authority of God's word, that if you are not saved from your sins here, you must be damned.' 'Well,' he said, 'I care not what you say; for no man can live without committing sin one day.' I replied, 'By your talk, it is as necessary for man to commit sin as to eat; for you say he cannot live without it. Now, doth it keep his body or soul alive? Or do you believe that all mankind are to live in sin, and die without perfecting holiness in the fear of God, and so be damned without hope or help?' He answered, 'No: God forbid!' 'Then,' I said, 'you must believe there is a purgatory, to cleanse the soul in after death. Sir, you and the devil speak one language; for he said to our mother Eve, "Did God say, In the day that ye eat thereof, ye shall die? Ye shall not die." God saith, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die"; but you say, "The souls of all must continue in sin, and yet they shall not die!"' He said, 'You shock me: if things be as you say, what will become of the greatest part of mankind?' I replied, 'Our Lord's

word is, "What is that to thee? follow thou Me." ' He said, 'I cannot but acknowledge you have the Scripture on your side; but if you are right, we are sadly wrong. I never did hear one of you in my life; for our minister has warned us not to hear you; but I am determined to hear you this night.' So he did, and thanked me kindly when I had done.

At my return home I was told that they were going to press men for His Majesty's service, and that several of the ale-house keepers and clergymen had agreed to press me for one; and I was advised not to preach for a season, by several of my neighbours: but I told them that I durst not leave off preaching for anything that man could do unto me. They replied, 'You should consider that you have a wife and children, and that your wife is now big with child: and if you be taken from them, what can the poor woman do, or how must she provide for her children?' I said, 'Let God look to that: if wicked men be suffered to take away my life for calling sinners to the blood of Jesus, the Lord, whose servant I am, will be a husband to the widow, and a father to the fatherless: and were I assured I should be banished or put to death for preaching, and my wife and children beg their bread bare-foot, I durst not leave off; for the words of our Lord pursue me, "He that loveth father or mother, wife or children, or his own life, more than Me, is not worthy of Me; and he that would save his life, shall lose it; and he that will lose his life for My sake shall save it." Therefore, pray for

me; but do not tempt me to sin against my own soul.'

A few days after, I went to Pudsey; but when I got there, the people of the house durst not let me preach. They told me the constables had orders to press me; and desired me not to alight, but go back directly. I rode down to a public-house where the constable and some others had met together, and talked with them; and I told the constable the people had said he had orders to press me; but he said, 'I will not; for you do not appear to be a vagrant, and my warrant runs for none but vagrants.' Many of the people followed me into the lane; and I sat on horse-back, exhorting them to keep close to God by prayer; and the Lord would build the walls of Jerusalem in these troublesome times.

Soon after I went to preach at Leeds. When I got there, I was told that two constables had orders to press me if I preached that night. I said, 'If the people will venture to hear, I dare not but preach'; and immediately I went to the place, where was a large congregation gathered together, to whom I preached; and a blessed season it was. The two constables gave great heed to what was spoken, and never offered to disturb me or any one of the people, but went away like men that feared God.

I still kept hewing stone in the day-time, and preaching every night. One day, as I was at work, the same Dissenting minister that had stopped me one morning came to me, and began to ask me many questions. He seemed offended with my

answers, and said he would have none of my *ifs* and *buts*. I answered, 'Sir, they are none of mine; they are the words of the Lord Jesus: and who is he that dares put asunder what the Lord hath joined together?' Then he replied, 'Do you think God would cut you off if you were to commit as great a sin as ever you committed in all your life?' I said, 'I believe I should thereby cut myself off from God: for the prophet saith, "Your sins have separated between you and your God"; and God saith, "My people have committed two evils: for they have forsaken Me, the Fountain of living water, and have hewn out to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." Now, sir, God would not have said, "They have forsaken Me," if they had never been acquainted with Him; and I believe that one of the cisterns which they hewed to themselves was the opinion you have in your head, that sin will not separate the soul from God.' He said, 'You do not understand the nature of God's decree; for God doth not look upon sin in the elect: He did not behold iniquity in Jacob, nor see sin in Israel.' I said, 'No, sir, He did not, while Jacob was upright, and God was his glory: at that time, God rejoiced over him, to do him good, with His whole heart and His whole soul: but when he committed whoredom with the daughters of Moab, and began to bow to their idols, then God's anger was kindled against Israel; and He cut off twenty-four thousand of them in His wrath; even the very people whom Balaam had pronounced blessed.'

Then his brother-in-law, who was by him, began to curse and swear, and lifted up his stick, saying he could find in his heart to knock me down, and called me a d——d dog; and said, 'Canst thou have the impudence to talk so to a minister? Thou deservest thy brains beaten out.' I said, 'Sir, here is an evidence of what I said; for you can be angry with me for preaching righteousness by Jesus Christ; but you do not reprove this man for blaspheming the holy name of God.' Then they went away, and left me to my work.

A little after, as I was at work, a man came to me, and said he had called at a public-house for a pint of ale, a little way from Birstall: and he heard the landlord offer to lay five pounds with some that were drinking that John Nelson would be sent for a soldier before ten days were past. I replied, 'The will of the Lord be done: if God permit it to be so, this also shall turn to the furtherance of the gospel.' He said, 'I would have you to take care; for evil is determined against you.' I answered, 'I am not my own, but the Lord's: he that lays hands on me will burn his own fingers; and God will deliver me after He hath tried me.'

Soon after, as I was at my work at another place, three gentlemen came to me, and one of them began to speak strongly against perfection. I gave him no answer. Then another began to talk about building, and said, 'Hewing of stone is a fine art.' I replied, 'Sir, it was a fine art once, when there were eighty thousand men together, so skilled in the art that the stones

were perfectly fitted for the places they were to have in the temple before they were brought off the mountain; so that when they came to Jerusalem there was not one stroke to strike at them, nor the sound of a tool heard in the building. Sir, you will allow those men to be workmen that needed not to be ashamed; for their work was perfect before it came to Jerusalem.' The gentleman said, 'You are right, you are right. I will never speak against holiness being perfected in this world again: for certainly that house of God at Jerusalem was a type of the house eternal in the heavens; and every stone of that must be fitted perfectly for its place in this world, or it must not be admitted into that New Jerusalem.' He added, 'I thank you, and wish that all our preachers may so square their work after the rule of God's Word that they may not be ashamed when they come to give up their accounts to Him who is Lord of the work.'

Wherever I went to preach, for ten days together, I was told that the constables had orders to press me. My answer was, 'The will of the Lord be done; for the fierceness of man shall turn to His praise.'

On Friday, as I was hewing stone, it was in my mind that trouble was near at hand; but the words of Isaiah were a stay to me: 'I, even I, am He that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass?' And again it came to me, 'Fear thou not, for I am with thee: be not dismayed,

for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness. Behold, all they that are incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.'

At night [May 3, 1744] I was met, as I was going to Adwalton, by one who told me that the parson and alehouse-keepers had agreed to press me that night, and to send me away the next morning; for the commissioners were to sit at Halifax, and they would dispatch me before I could get any one to appear in my behalf. And he said, 'I would have you turn back; for there is one alehouse-keeper that swears he will press you, if his arm rots from his shoulder.' I answered, 'I cannot fear; for God is on my side, and His word hath added strength to my soul this day: and if I fall into the hands of wicked men, God shall be glorified thereby; and when He hath proved me in the furnace, He will bring me forth as gold.'

Accordingly, I went to Adwalton, and expounded, at John Booth's, to a well-behaved congregation. When I had done, Joseph Gibson, the constable's deputy (an alehouse-keeper, who found his craft was in danger), pressed me for a soldier.[1] I asked him by whose order: he said several of the inhabitants of the town, who did not like so much preaching; and, by his own

[1] The Vicar of Birstall, the Rev. Mr. Coleby, was also in the plot.

talk, it appeared they were those of his own craft, and the clergyman, who had agreed together.[1]

He caused me to go to the White Hart, whither Mr. Charlesworth, and Mr. Holmes of Sykehouse, and several more, went with us, and Mr. Charlesworth offered £500 bail for me till the next day; but no bail was to be taken for a Methodist (so called).[2] He protested I should go to his house. I made no resistance, but went, and several of our people with us; and we sang a hymn, and prayed together, and so parted.

Next morning several people came to see me before we went from Adwalton. Here I was kept ten hours before the warrant came into his house. When the constable came, he said, if he had been there, he would have prevented what Gibson had done.

Between eight and nine I went to Birstall, to my house; and, after I had changed my clothes, we set out for Halifax. When I was brought before the commissioners, they smiled one at another as soon as they saw me. They bade the door-keepers not to let any man come in; but Mr. Thomas Brooks had got in with me; and they said, 'That is one of his converts.'

[1] The house at Adwalton in which Nelson's arrest took place has been pulled down; but a building, called 'Nelson's House,' in commemoration of the event, was erected in 1877 on the site.

[2] In a letter of Feb., 1748 (*Arminian Magazine*, 1778, p. 530), Nelson describes how 'an old gentleman that was concerned in sending me for a soldier' had been converted on his death-bed and asked Nelson to 'preach over him.' By that sermon 'God laid His hand on many that had been enemies. Now they flock to hear the word, and the Lord works amongst us.'

They then called Joseph Gibson, and asked, 'How many men have you brought?' He said, 'One.' 'Well, and what have you against him?' 'Why, gentlemen,' said he, 'I have nothing to say against him, but he preaches to the people; and some of our townsmen don't like so much preaching.' They broke out in laughter; and one of them swore I was fit to go for a soldier, for there I might have preaching enough. I said to him, 'Sir, you ought not to swear.' 'Well,' said they to me, 'you have no licence to preach, and you shall go for a soldier.' I answered, 'Sir, I have surely as much right to preach as you have to swear.' He said to the captain, 'Captain, is he fit for you?' 'Yes,' he answered. 'Then take him away.'

But I said, 'Here are several of my honest neighbours: you ought to give me the liberty of another man, and hear what they say of me, whether I am such a one as the warrant mentions, or not.' They answered, 'Here is your minister' (one of the commissioners), 'and he has told us of your character, and we will hear no more.' So I found I was condemned before the commissioners saw me.

Then Mr. Brooks laid the petitions before them, sent me by neighbouring gentlemen, which testified I had done no evil, but had behaved myself well in my neighbourhood, and had always maintained my family very well; and they desired them to set me at liberty. And Mr. Brooks said, 'Gentlemen, you see he is not such a man as is mentioned in the warrant.' But

they made him hold his peace, and said, 'You are one of his pupils, and ought to go with him.' He answered, 'Why do you not send me then? for you have as much right to send me as him.'

Then our minister spoke and said, 'Young Brooks lives with a woman of the worst character in our town.' When I heard him speak against his neighbour such notorious falsehoods as these, I thought it would be to no purpose for Mr. Brooks to say any more; so I desired him to be silent. Then they read the papers sent on my behalf; and one of the company asked if he must put them on the fire. But the answer to him by several was, 'No; for if they be called for, they will make against us.'

'So,' said I, 'gentlemen, I see there is neither law nor justice for a man that is called a Methodist; but all is lawful that is done against me. I pray God forgive you; for you know not what you do.' They answered, 'Surely your minister must be a better judge of you than any other man; and he has told us enough of you and your preaching.' 'Well,' said I, 'Mr. C[oleby], what do you know of me that is evil? Whom have I defrauded? Or where have I contracted a debt that I cannot pay?' He said, 'You have no visible way of getting your living.' I answered, 'I am as able to get my living with my hands as any man of my trade in England is, and you know it; and have I not been at work yesterday, and all the week before?' But they bade the captain take me away: so he came, and said, 'We will take you off preaching soon.' I answered, 'You

must first ask my Master's leave.' But he said, 'We will make you give over.' I replied, 'It is out of your power.' Then he thrust me into a corner of the room, and said, 'You shall have company presently.'

Afterwards several were brought to the commissioners, and three condemned to go with me, and four or five acquitted. But all had their neighbours to speak for them except me; for what need was there of any other witness?

Glory be to God on high! He kept my soul all this time in perfect peace; and I could say to Him, from my heart—

Whilst Thou, O my God, art nigh,
My soul disdains to fear;
Sin and Satan I defy,
Still impotently near:
Earth and hell their wars may wage,
Calm I mark their vain design,
Smile to see them idly rage
Against a child of Thine.

Then the captain read the articles to us that were condemned, and said, 'You hear, your doom is death if you disobey us.' I answered, 'I do not fear the man that can kill me, any more than I do him who can cut down a dog-standard: for I know my life is hid with Christ in God; and He will judge between you and me one day: but I beseech Him not to lay this sin to your charge.' And to Mr. C[oleby] I said, 'Sir, I pray God forgive you; for you have given me such a character as not another man in England will that knows me.'

I was greatly surprised to see men sit on the judgement-seat, and drink and swear as they did; and a man that had a commission from God to reprove all that do such things could hear and see, and yet never speak in God's cause. It made me cry out to the Lord, 'Take the matter in Thy hand, O God! for righteousness is fallen in the streets, and iniquity bears rule.' But I could not hear them swear but must speak to them, although they mocked at my reproof.

Then we were guarded to Halifax; but the keeper would not let us come into his jail. We were taken to the officer's quarters, and kept till six at night, where John Rhodes and Thomas Charlesworth, of Little Gomersal, came to see me, and cared for my soul as if they had been my mother's sons. O my God, remember them for good, and give them and their houses, and all that wish well to our Sion, to rejoice in the gladness of Thy people!

At six we set out for Bradford, and many of the inhabitants prayed for me, and wept to see me in the hands of unrighteous and cruel men. But I said, 'Fear not: God hath His way in the whirlwind; and He will plead my cause. Only pray for me, that my faith fail not.'

When we were about halfway between Halifax and Bradford, one of the soldiers said to me, 'Sir, I am sorry for you; for the captain is ordered by the commissioners to put you in the dungeon. But I will speak to him, and if he will let me have the care of you, you shall lie with me; for the dungeon is as loathsome a place

as ever I saw.' I thanked him for his offer. But when we got to Bradford, we were drawn up in the street where the cross stood, and the captain went and fetched the people of the dungeon, and said, 'Take this man, and put him into the dungeon; and take this other along with you' (a poor harmless man, all the clothes upon whose back were not worth one shilling: neither did they lay anything to his charge, when he was ordered for a soldier). But when we came to the dungeon-door, the soldier who spoke to me by the way went to the captain, and said, 'Sir, if you will give me charge over Mr. Nelson, my life for his, he shall be forthcoming in the morning.' But the captain threatened to break his head if he spoke about me any more.

The captain came to us before I went down; and I asked him, 'Sir, what have I done, that I must go to the dungeon? If you are afraid of me, that I should run away, set a guard over me in a room, and I will pay them.' He answered, 'My order is to put you in the dungeon.' So I see my Lord's word is fulfilled, 'The servant is not above his Master.' For those who were accused of thieving, and great evils which they had done in the neighbourhood, must eat and drink, and lie on feather-beds; but I only desired a little water, and it was refused me by the captain, although I had had nothing all the day, except a little tea in the morning. But my Master never sends His servants a warfare at their own charge: He gives strength according to their day. For, when I came into the dungeon, that stunk worse

than a hog-stye by reason of the blood and filth which sink from the butchers who kill over it,[1] my soul was so filled with the love of God that it was a paradise to me.

Then could I cry out, 'Oh the glorious liberty of the sons of God!' And I fell down on my knees, and gave God thanks, that He counted me worthy to be put into a dungeon for the truth's sake; and prayed that my enemies might be saved from the wrath to come, I think with as much desire as I could feel for my mother's own children. I wished they were as happy in their own houses as I was in the dungeon.

About ten several of the people came to the dungeon-door, and brought me some candles, and put me some meat and water in through the hole of the door. When I had eaten and drunk, I gave God thanks; and we sang hymns almost all night, they without, and I within.

The same night, a man that lives in Bradford[2] came to the dungeon, and, though he was an enemy to the Methodists, when he smelt the ill savour of the place, he said, 'Humanity moves me.' He went away directly, and about eleven came again, and said, 'I will assure you I am not in your way of thinking; but for all that, I have been with your captain, and offered ten pounds bail for you, and myself as prisoner, if he would

[1] The dungeon was entered from a dark passage in Ivegate, and had two compartments of three feet square, one used for male, the other for female prisoners. See Wesley Historical Society *Proceedings*, vol. v. p. 172.

[2] James Eastwood, an innkeeper in Ivegate.

let you lie in a bed; but all in vain, for I can get nothing out of him but bad words. If the justice were in town, I would have gone to him, and would soon have fetched you out. But since it is as it is, I pray God plead your cause.' O my God, let not him that would give a cup of cold water to Thy servants lose his reward; but do Thou bless him, and bless Thy people! And I beseech Thee to have mercy upon our enemies, and let not Thy heavy judgements fall upon them; but be Thou glorified in their conversion, not in their destruction!

The poor man that was with me might have starved if my friends had not brought him meat; for when our guard had locked us up, they went to their lodging, and took no more thought of us that night. Here we had not so much as a stone to sit on.

When the man and I were laid down on a little foul straw, 'Pray you, sir,' said he, 'are all these your kinsfolk, that they love you so well? I think they are the most loving people that ever I saw in my life.' I answered, 'By this you may know that they are Jesus Christ's disciples; for this is the mark He Himself has given, whereby all men might know His disciples from the unbelieving world.'

At four in the morning, my wife and several more came to the dungeon, and spoke to me through the hole of the door; and I said, 'Jeremiah's lot is fallen upon me.' Then it came to my remembrance that, when I was about thirteen or fourteen years old, I often thought, if God

should make me like Jeremiah, to stand and speak His words to the people in the streets, as he did, I should not mind who cast dirt at me. And now I am in some measure treated as he was for persuading men to flee from the wrath to come.

My wife said, 'Fear not: the cause is God's for which you are here, and He will plead it Himself. Therefore be not concerned about me and the children; for He that feeds the young ravens will be mindful of us; He will give you strength for your day; and after we have suffered awhile, He will perfect that which is lacking in our souls, and then bring us "where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest."'

So they all said that were with her at the door. I was greatly refreshed at finding my wife so strong in the faith, when she was like to be left with two children, and big with another at the same time; and said, 'I cannot fear either man or devil, so long as I find the love of God as I do now; for He has cheered my heart as with sweet wine, ever since He suffered me to be cast into prison. Oh that I may be faithful unto death, and I shall receive the crown of life! For not one word of Jesus shall fall to the ground, till all be accomplished.'

About five in the morning, they took me out, and we were guarded to Leeds, and stood in the street till ten. Hundreds flocked to see me. Some said, 'It is a shame to send a man for a soldier for speaking the truth: for many of our neighbours that follow the Methodists, and were as wicked before as any people in the town, are

now like new creatures; for we do not hear an ill word come out of their mouths.' Others cried, 'I wish they were all hanged out of the way; for they make people go mad; and we cannot get drunk or swear, but every fool must correct us, as if we were to be taught by them. But I hope they will now be brought to nought; for that is one of the worst of them.'

As I was standing, a jolly, well-dressed woman came up to me, and put her face almost to mine, and said, 'Now, Nelson, where is thy God? Thou saidst at Shent's door, as thou wast preaching, thou wast no more afraid of His promise failing than thou wast of dropping through the heart of the earth.' I replied, 'Look in the seventh chapter of Micah, and the 8th and 10th verses.'

Just as the church began, I was guarded to the jail, and the others to the ale-house. The jailkeeper here was very civil; for he let my friends come in several times to see me. I thought of the Pilgrim's Progress: for hundreds of people in the street stood and looked at me through the iron gate, and were ready to fight about me. Several would have given bail for me, if they would let me out; but I was told that one hundred pounds were refused which were offered by a stranger for me. I am too notorious a criminal to be allowed such favours; for Christianity is a crime which the world can never forgive.

At night, I believe a hundred of our friends were with me in the jail together. We sang a hymn and prayed. I gave an exhortation, and

we parted. But Mr. H—— was not willing that I should lie on dirty straw, and therefore sent me a bed. I find the time is not yet come for me to be hated of all men for the sake of Christ. I pray God to give me strength for that day. Glory be to His holy name, hitherto His grace is sufficient for me, and I hang upon His promise for strength in my next trials.

At five on Monday morning I was let out of jail, and we marched off for York directly. Many of our friends went with us out of the town near three miles; but when I came to take my leave, they mourned as one that had lost his first-born. I spoke comfortable words to them, and bade them 'stand fast, in nothing terrified by their adversaries; which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. So the peace of God be with you all!' We came to York by three, and were brought before several of the officers, at the Black Swan, in Coney Street, who seemed to rejoice as men that had taken great spoil, and saluted me with many a grievous oath. It brought something to my mind which I had spoken in the fields to the Lord, when He had broken a great cloud that was on my soul, through my refusing to preach when many had desired me, and I had time, but consulted with flesh and blood, and, Jonah-like, fled from the presence of the Lord, down into a valley near the side of a wood, where God laid His hand on me, and brought my soul into such distress that I threw myself on the ground and wished for death; seeing it more agreeable to

flesh and blood to be a shepherd's dog than a preacher of the gospel; for his hand is against every man, and every man's hand against him. But at the remembrance of the prophets, and the apostles, and Christ Himself, what contradictions and tribulations they all met with, the cloud broke, and my soul was so refreshed with the love of God that I cried out, 'My Lord and my God! Now Thou hast given me strength, forsake me not; and if Thou send me to hell to preach to devils, I am ready to go.'

When I was before these officers, and heard such language, I thought hell could not be much worse than the company I was in. I asked them, 'Do you believe that there is a God, and that He is a God of truth?' They said, 'We do.' I answered, 'I cannot believe you, I tell you plainly.' 'Why so?' I replied, 'I cannot think that any man of common understanding, who believes that God is true, dares take His name in vain; much less do you believe that God can hear you when you pray to Him to damn your souls. Now, suppose God should grant you the damnation you pray for, what miserable wretches would you be! Do you know that you must one day appear before that God who will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain?'

As I reasoned with them about a future state, they seemed to shrink as if I had thrown fire at them; but they soon put away the conviction, and said, 'You must not preach here; for you are delivered to us for a soldier, and must not talk so to us who are officers.' I answered, 'There

is but one way to prevent me.' They asked, 'What is that?' I replied, 'It is to swear no more in my hearing.'

Then we were guarded through the city; but it was as if hell were moved from beneath to meet me at my coming. The streets and windows were filled with people, who shouted and huzzaed as if I had been one that had laid waste the nation. But the Lord made my brow like brass, so that I could look on them as grasshoppers, and pass through the city as if there had been none in it but God and myself. Oh that I may never offend my gracious God, or provoke Him to take His lovingkindness from me! Then, though I go through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. Even now I find His word fulfilled, where He saith, 'I will deliver thee from sudden fear and from terror; for it shall not come near thee.' Verily, Thou art a God of truth! Oh be merciful to this great city, whose streets ring with curses, and turn upon them a pure language, that their souls may be saved, and the enemy disappointed of his hope!

I was brought to the guard-house, and the officers cast lots for me, and it was Captain S——'s lot to have me. Then they offered me money, but I refused to take it; and they bade the sergeant handcuff me, and send me to prison. I was guarded thither by a file of musqueteers, but not handcuffed, and kept two nights and part of three days; during which time I was beset with such cursers and swearers as could hardly be matched out of hell. So I had work

enough both day and night to reprove them. I found they could not stand my words, but the most hardened among them shrunk, and wished they could leave it off, and never swear more.

Several of the townspeople came and asked me of the doctrine that the Methodists preached, 'which makes their names,' said they, 'to be loathed by all sects and parties in the nation.' My answer was, 'The same doctrine it is which made Jews and Gentiles conspire against Jesus Christ, who first preached it; and whoever he be that bears the testimony, he must meet with the same treatment. Our Lord has said, "Ye shall be hated of all men for My sake"; and again, "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." What! do you think Christ would be found a liar, and all His apostles, who tell us of the things that are done in this our day? Nay, verily, heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one word of Christ's shall fall to the ground.'

When I had opened the Scriptures, and told them the fundamental points of our doctrine, they said one to another, 'This people is not what the world represents them; for if this be their doctrine, there is not a man in England can contradict them.' They offered me strong drink; but I told them I did not choose it. They wished me out of my enemies' hands, and left me to my company of drunkards and swearers.

I may indeed say I have fought with beasts at York; for so these men live. Yet my speaking to them was not in vain; for they bridled their

tongues in my presence, after the first twenty-four hours. When they spake any blasphemous words, if I did but turn and look them in the face, they looked like criminals before the magistrate.

The next morning, as I lay on the boards to rest me, I fell asleep, and I dreamed of Daniel in the lions' den. I was awakened by one crying, 'Nelson, Nelson!' and I started up, saying, 'Who wants me?' That instant three women came to the door, and brought me some food. They were entire strangers to me, and I to them; 'but Thou, Lord, carest for me.'

On Tuesday night, my wife and sister Mitchell came to see me, and found me lying on the boards. I said, 'Behold the fruits of the gospel! Now you see the word of God is fulfilled: "They lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and he that turneth from evil maketh himself a prey." But God looks down from heaven, and will plead our cause: fear not.' 'No,' answered they, 'we do not fear; for our God is as able to deliver now as He was seventeen hundred years ago.' So they took their leave of me that night, wishing me a good repose on my wooden bed; where, thanks be to God, I slept as well as if I had been on a bed of down.

Next morning they brought me something to eat, and bade me be strong in the Lord, and not fear them that can kill the body only. My heart rejoiced to see them so steadfast in the faith.

This day a court-martial was held, and I was guarded to it by a file of musqueteers, with their bayonets fixed. When I came before the court,

they asked, 'What is this man's crime?' The answer was, 'This is the Methodist preacher, and he refuses to take money.' Then they turned to me, and said, 'Sir, you need not find fault with us, for we must obey our orders, which are to make you act as a soldier; for you are delivered to us; and if you have not justice done you, we cannot help it.'

My answer was, 'I shall not fight; for I cannot bow my knee before the Lord to pray for a man, and get up and kill him when I have done. I know God both hears me speak and sees me act; and I should expect the lot of a hypocrite if my actions contradict my prayers.' 'Well, don't stand preaching to us,' said they; 'for we must make you obey us. Sergeant, give him some money.' He offered me two shillings, but I refused to take them. They threatened me sore; but I could not fear them at all. 'Well,' said they, 'if you run away, you are as liable to suffer as if you had taken our money.' I answered, 'If I cannot be discharged lawfully, I shall not run away: if I do, punish me as you please.' Then they ordered the sergeant to go to quarters with me. He took me to the Wild Man, in Petergate; where the people behaved well to me, though they had eight more quartered upon them. They said, 'It is a pity you should come among such a wicked crew as these we have; for there are but few like them in the world.' They ordered me a room and a bed to myself. Blessed be God, who gives me favour in the sight of the Egyptians! These people were professed Papists,

who, I might imagine, would show no more mercy to a man that preaches salvation by faith than they would do to a mad dog. Yet I see it is not the man that makes the Christian, but the mind which was in Christ; and whosoever hath this mind in him, he is a Christian, let the world call him what it will.

I came to Margaret Townshend's, and met with my wife and sister Mitchell, who rejoiced to see my feet once more out of the prison. We sang praises to God for His great mercies to me at this time, and passed the afternoon in encouraging each other. Next morning I sent them out of town, and went, as I was ordered, to parade at the Blue Boar, in Castle-gate; where the officers ordered Corporal W—— to fetch me a gun and other warlike instruments. The corporal seemed to shudder at the task, but was forced to obey; and when he brought them and was girding them about me, he trembled as if he had the palsy.

I asked, 'Why do you gird me with these warlike habiliments? for I am a man averse to war, and shall not fight but under the Prince of Peace, the Captain of my salvation; and the weapons He gives me are not carnal like these.' 'Well,' said they, 'but you must bear these till you can get your discharge.' 'As you put them on me,' I answered, 'I will bear them as a cross, and use them as far as I can without defiling my conscience; but that I will not do for any man on earth.'

The officers bade them march us off to Hepworth Moor, to learn the exercise of a soldier; but

Corporal W—— seemed as tender to me as if he had been my own father, and carried the gun for me to the field. And when he came to teach me their exercise, his heart seemed to fail him, and he bade me lay down the gun, and we fell into discourse. I found he had the fear of God before his eyes, and the Lord had shown him the light of His countenance. But he was as a sparrow alone on the house-top; none cared for his conversation, but they all despised him because he would not get drunk and swear as they did. O my God, remember him for good always, I beseech Thee!

Next day I was ordered to the field, and others must teach me the warlike exercise, who also behaved civilly to me. I had more to see me than all the rest; and it caused the truth to break out the more, and removed prejudice from many. I found the people at York looked upon one that is called a Methodist as one who had the plague, and infects all whom he comes near; and they blessed God that none had come to preach there.

But if I was bound, the word of God was not bound; for if any blasphemed, I reproved them, whether rich or poor, and fell into many disputes with them; and God gave me words such as they could not resist. My discourses had such an effect on them that they said they wished Mr. Wesley would come and preach there. I gave them several of our little books. So, by hearing and reading, they found out the doctrine to be only the plain word of God. And now

several attended my coming to the field; not to see me, as before, but to ask questions, and to know of 'the new doctrine,' as some were pleased to call it. Surely, by all these things shall the gospel be spread. The Lord is in the tempest, and it shall turn to His glory. Satan doth but whet a knife to cut his own throat.

One day, as I was talking to the people, a man came and feigned himself to be concerned about his soul. As he was coming, it was impressed upon my mind that he was a deceiver. As soon as he approached, I said, 'You are a wicked man, and Satan hath sent you with a lie in your mouth; but God will not be mocked.' He went away as one condemned. Before he had gone one hundred yards, he fell down, and broke a limb, and dislocated his shoulder. Then he roared like a bear, saying, 'It is a just judgement from God on me,' and desired me to pray for him.

On Sunday [May 13] I went to Coney Street church, and the Lord manifested Himself to me in great love at the sacrament. At night Hannah Scholefield and I, with our brother Houghton from Manchester and two or three more, went out into the fields, thinking to retire; but some had seen us, and told others that we were going to sing hymns. In a few minutes we had near a hundred to keep us company. We sang two hymns, and I gave them an exhortation. They received my word with meekness, and wished to hear me again.

We went a mile another way; but there were

people walking there also, who, knowing me, flocked to us, and desired to hear what sort of doctrine it was which caused all men to hate us. I said, 'It is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, which made all men hate Him; and ye are sensible our great Shepherd said, "Ye shall be hated of all men for My sake."' But they said, 'This is a Christian land, and it is not so now.' 'Well,' said I, 'then you must say the gospel is not an everlasting gospel, or you declare us blessed, and almost all the people in England cursed.' They said, 'What, do you point the blessings to you, and the curse to all the rest? We think it is the other way.' 'Then,' said I, 'you do not think as Christ speaks; for He said, "Blessed are ye when all men speak evil of you, and hate you for My sake and the gospel's: rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for so they did to the prophets of old. But woe unto you when all men speak well of you; for so they spake of the false prophets."' Upon this they were silent, but wished they could hear me themselves, as they then should be better able to judge. By this time a great company were come together, desiring to hear me; and God gave me to speak plainly, and to their hearts. When I had done, several of them said they would go ten miles to hear such another discourse. The prejudice seemed taken out of their minds at a stroke; and they cried, 'This is the doctrine which ought to be preached, let men say what they will against it.'

As we came back, one of our company said, 'I wonder the devil cannot perceive that this striving

to suppress the gospel is like striving to quench the fire by casting oil upon it. As God spake, so it is, I see, this day. His servants are like brands of fire cast into dry stubble. Surely God will be glorified in your captivity; only let us watch and pray, that the enemy get no advantage over us.'

The day following I went as before to exercise, when many came to talk with me, some to dispute, and some who earnestly desired to be saved. Among the disputers was a clergyman. I knew him; for I had seen him in his gown three days before. When several who appeared as gentlemen disputed hotly against all the power of religion, I showed them from the Articles, Homilies, and Prayers of our own Church that those who speak as they did were no members of the Church of England; for to be a real member of Christ's Church is to feel Christ in us—to know that He died for His church, and that by His death we are delivered from death eternal —to find that Spirit which raised Him from the dead raising us from the death of sin, that our bodies may be the undefiled temples of the living God, a holy habitation of God, through His Spirit dwelling in us. For as many as have the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God; and if any man have not the Spirit of God, he is none of His. 'Nay, if you know not,' I added, 'that Christ is in you, you are now in a state of reprobation.' 'So,' said they, 'you have condemned us all at a stroke.' I answered, 'I have condemned no man; for I have not spoken my own, but the

words of God; as I appeal to your consciences, you that have ever read the Scriptures.'

When they were put to silence, the minister began to explain the Spirit of God out of the Word, as what could not be felt or perceived at all, neither was it necessary, now we had the Scriptures to go by. I said, 'It is highly necessary, if the Scriptures be true; for they tell me if I have not the Spirit of Christ, I am none of His; and if I am not His, I must belong to the devil, for they two share the world between them. Besides, if there be no such thing as receiving the Holy Spirit nowadays, as you say, then he who repeats the prayers of the Church offers to God the sacrifice of fools.' Here he stormed at me, and called me an enthusiast, and said, 'To talk of the Spirit is all a delusion.' 'Hold, sir,' I replied, 'or I shall expose you before the people, which I did not design to do. How could you affirm, before God and the congregation, that you were inwardly moved by the Holy Spirit to take upon you the office of a deacon; and now testify there is no such thing as being moved by the Holy Spirit?' He said, 'Did I say so?' 'Yes, sir,' I answered, 'you did, when you received holy orders.' He turned pale, spake not ten words more, but went away. I have met him several times since, and he speaks kindly to me.

I had some every day to dispute with me, and every night some to converse with me, who wanted to know the way to Zion. The people now cried out, 'When will Mr. Wesley come? for here are thousands in this town that would gladly

hear him.' Indeed I found a great desire in them to know the way of salvation; yea, and they seemed willing to be saved in God's own way; that is, *from* their sins, not *in* them. Surely the Lord will be mindful of them, and give them teachers after His own heart!

The second Sunday I went to church, and my heart was comforted again by the love of God in the sacrament. God, I find, will meet with us in His own ways. Oh may we never forsake them!

This week several of the brethren came to see me, and we were comforted together. Our brother Ash brought me some little books, which I gave to the people who came to see me; so that, by my speaking and their reading, many began to be alarmed, and sent for me to their houses to inquire, 'How can these things be which you affirm? For if these things are as you say, and Mr. Wesley has here written, then we are not Christians.' I told them, 'I will prove those things to be true, both from our own Church and the written Word of God; and if you find you have not these inward marks of faith, such as peace, joy, love, and the witness of the Spirit, you are not Christians yet. But that is no reason why you should not become such: for Christ has commanded repentance and remission of sins to be preached to every soul in His name; and He doth actually pardon and absolve all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe His holy gospel. Therefore seek, and you shall find; for the truth of God binds Him to give to every one that asketh.'

The people attended my going into the field all this week; and when I went along the streets, they came out of their houses to stare at me, as if I had been a monster. I have read that they would not suffer any to buy or sell in the city unless they had the mark of the beast; but here, without his mark, we cannot so much as pass the streets. O my God, why is Thy servant as a speckled bird in this which is called a Christian country!—called after Thy most sacred name; which whosoever nameth must depart from iniquity! How is the faithful city become a harlot, and Thy people taken captive by the enemy at his will! It is for Thee, Lord, to lay to Thine hand; for they have destroyed Thy law!

One day this week, after my exercise on the moor, there came a gentleman in gold lace, and a minister in disguise, and began asking me questions; which I answered according to the ability God gave me. Many flocked round about us to hear: for our dispute was long, and hot on their side. I believe we had talked half an hour before I perceived he was a minister; for I took him for a lawyer, and such an one as believed there was no God! For if I spake of the Scripture, he threw up his head, and called me a fool, and bade me hold my nonsense. I said, 'That which you call nonsense, I call the highest wisdom.' When I spake anything of the Spirit of God, he heaved his cane at me as if he would have struck me; but God gave me perfect ease in my soul, and words which made him start,

and convinced the bystanders of the truth. He was so enraged that he foamed at the mouth like a horse that is hard ridden.

But when I understood that he was a minister, I said, 'Hold, sir; let me speak a little, by your leave. You call yourself a minister of the Church of England, do you not?' 'I do.' 'Pray then, sir, what doctrine do you preach? For you make the word of God of none effect, and you deny all inspiration.' He replied, 'So I do deny all inspiration.' 'How dare you then pray for the inspiration of God's Spirit, when you do not believe there is any such thing?' When he had raged awhile, he said, 'I believe you have read the book of Job, and made it all your own.' I answered, 'I have need of patience, who have men of such principles as you to talk with, that regard not what they say to provoke one; but I thank God you have not done it yet.' He replied, 'My reason for speaking so is because you cannot be quiet with your nonsense and inspiration. And I hear you have preached several times since you came, and have filled the heads of many in this town with your new doctrine.' I told him I had not preached publicly since I came, but did not know how soon I might. Then he shook his stick, stamped, and said in anger, 'If you do preach publicly, we shall take an order with you, which shall be worse than sending you for a soldier.' 'Let God look to that,' I answered; 'for by His grace I can love all men, but fear none that can kill the body only. I assure you, it is not the fear of man which shall

hinder me from preaching; for where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.' When he began to calm a little, I asked him, 'Sir, suppose you had been inwardly moved by the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel: if the outward ordination were refused you, when you believed yourself called according to the will of Christ to preach, would you forbear preaching? that is, would you obey man or God?' 'I suppose,' said he, 'you think you have put a hard question to me.' But, hard or easy, he never answered; and I cannot remember that I ever saw him since. Just as he went away, he challenged me to go into a room with him; but I said, 'I have done fighting, sir.'

On Saturday several desired me to preach on Sunday morning. I told them I should take a walk out to the moor, at half an hour after seven. Accordingly, I did so, and found thrice as many as I expected, and preached to about three hundred well-behaved people, who entreated me to preach to them again at night. I answered some of them I did not know but I might: yet I gave no public notice; but one told another, and it spread through the city.

I went to the Minster, and heard the bishop preach, and received the blessed sacrament at his hands. At seven in the evening I went to the moor, and found an unexpected congregation; I believe six thousand people. But there was nothing prepared for me to stand on; and great part of the soldiers were there almost drunk, and began to quarrel with the people that crowded

about me; so that I saw there was likely to be mischief done, and prevented it by withdrawing. If I had preached, I believe they would have behaved very quietly; for they seemed to have a great desire to hear what this doctrine was. I had not the opportunity of satisfying them at this time; but they that heard in the morning told others, and inflamed them the more with a desire to hear for themselves. Several sent for me to their houses, and others came to me: so I see God will work, and who shall hinder? Lord, open their understanding, that they may know the things which belong to their everlasting peace!

On Monday I heard that some clergymen were with the officers; and, at night, one of the officers sent for me, and said, 'What, you cannot leave off preaching yet; but we must be blamed about you. But if ever you preach publicly again, you shall be severely whipped.' My answer was, 'I am not careful in this matter. It is better to obey God than man! I believe it is the will of God that I should preach: and I have not taken man to please in anything that will offend my God.'

With many threats he bade me go: but I made no promise to obey him; neither did I intend it in this case; for I had promised to go to Acomb, a village about a mile out of York. The next evening, accordingly, I went, and preached to almost all the inhabitants, in a field. The Lord gave me to speak His word freely, and sent it with power to their hearts: the rock was struck, and the water gushed out. All whom I

saw behaved well. Many said, 'We hope you will come again; for, let men say what they will of this people, this is the truth, and so we shall find it one day.'

As I came down the street, an alderman and his wife, of York, who had been to hear me, were standing at the gate of his house, and he called me, and said, 'If you please to accept of a glass of any sort of liquor which my house affords, it is at your service.' I answered, 'I thank you for your good-will, but I don't care to drink.' Several others offered me drink, but I took none. They prayed me to come once a week, as long as I stayed in York. Lord, be mindful of this people, I beseech Thee; and send them those who will preach righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ! And oh that they may be found with the wedding-garment on in that day when every covering which is not of Thy Spirit will be found as filthy rags before Thy pure eyes!

All that week I had company as much as I could tell what to do with. Several desired me to preach on Sunday morning. I did not promise, but went to discourse with about a score, at seven, on the moor. Others had a suspicion of my being there; and I believe two hundred flocked round me, as soon as they saw me walking, and begged me to preach to them. I told them I stood in jeopardy if I did; but they answered, 'We are more in danger than you, for our souls are in danger'; on which it came into my mind that I had freely received, and I ought freely to give. I therefore preached to them; and God was

with us of a truth, and the hearts of the people were opened to receive the word in love.

Thence I went to sister Townshend's, where I found my own brother, and brother Mitchell, who came to see me ; and we were comforted together. Our time was short ; for I had but half an hour before I had to answer for what I had done. Somebody had told the ensign that I had been preaching : so he sent for me, and said, 'D—n your blood, sir, have you been preaching this morning?' I told him I had ; on which he swore he would have no preaching nor praying in the regiment. 'Then, sir,' said I, 'you ought to have no swearing or cursing neither ; for surely I have as much right to pray and preach as you have to curse and swear.'

He swore again that I should be damnably whipped for what I had done. I answered, 'Let God look to that : the cause is His. But if you do not leave off your cursing and swearing, it will be worse with you than with me.' Then he said, 'Corporal, put this fellow into prison directly.' The corporal said, 'Sir, I must not carry a man to prison unless I give in his crime with him.' 'Well,' said he, 'it is for disobeying orders.' So I see a hundred may disobey all the orders of God, and there is no notice taken of them ; nor do the common people cry out, 'Hang them out of the way' ; but if one of a thousand begins to reprove them for sin, they hale him to prison, as if he had killed father or mother. But so it was from the beginning ; for a murderer was preferred before the Prince of Life.

I was put prisoner just as the church service began ; and I sent a man to tell my brother that the word of God was fulfilled, ' Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried,' and desired their prayers, that I might be faithful unto death. As soon as I was within the prison, my heart was filled with joy unspeakable, and my mouth with praise to my gracious Redeemer. This also shall turn to the glory of God ; for several men of good report heard me this morning, and testified that I had spoken the truth ; and they would not, they said, be guilty of sending that man to prison for preaching, for all the world. This caused many to come to me, who offered me wine and strong drink. I told them I did not care for any sort of strong liquor ; but such as I had, I gave unto them —some little books, and the word of God, which He gave me plentifully to speak to them, without respect to any man's person.

Two nights, and near three days, I was kept prisoner at this time ; during which my soul was as a watered garden, and I could sing praises to God all day long ; for He turned my captivity into joy, and gave me to rest as well on the boards as if I had been on a bed of down. Now could I say, ' God's service is perfect freedom ' ; and I was carried out much in prayer that my enemies might drink of the same river of peace which my God gave so largely to me.

Now did I more plainly see the dreadful state of the unconverted than ever ; and thought, if it might be the conversion of my enemies, I could

be content that they should tread me under their feet. But God only knows how it would have been had I been so tried; yet thus far He hath helped me, and hath given me strength for my day. Indeed, I have found Him a God of truth, as far as I have tried Him; and I put forth the hand of my faith to lay hold on His strength for what He shall next call me to.

On Tuesday I was fetched out, and brought before the major. There were several of the young officers with him, who smiled when I came into the room; for they had been several times to see me in prison, and had sworn I should be severely whipped. But I told them, 'If you do not repent and leave off that swearing, you will perish eternally: and I shall be a witness against you; and that will be worse than your whipping me for Christ's sake.'

Now they seemed to rejoice, as if their words were going to be fulfilled. The major called, 'John Nelson: what were you put into prison for?' 'For warning people to flee from the wrath to come,' I answered; 'and, if this be a crime, I shall commit it again, unless you cut my tongue out; for it is better to die than disobey God.' 'Well, but if that be all,' he replied, 'it is no crime; for when you have done your duty, I do not care if you preach every night in a house, or any private place out of the town. But I would not have you make any mobs.' 'That,' said I, 'is far from my design.' 'Well,' said he, 'you may go home to your quarters: and, if I have a convenient time, I

will send for you, and hear you myself; for I wish all men were like you.' Here my adversaries hung down their heads, and gave off smiling.

As I went to sister Townshend's, I heard that we were to leave York on Thursday, at four in the morning, and march to Sunderland. I had a great desire to see my wife first; but she did not get my letter soon enough. Many of the people came, and said, 'We are sorry you are going so soon from York: but, if you get your liberty, we hope both you and Mr. Wesley will come; for we have need of such plain dealing, and thousands in this city would be glad to hear. You see what a populous, wicked place it is. Pray do not forget us, but think of us when you see us not. We expected some of you two or three years ago; but you had no regard for our souls till God brought you by force. Surely you were not sold hither, but sent for our good: therefore forget us not.'

Oh the tenderness which this people showed, and desire for the word of God! It moved me to cry out, 'Lord, have mercy on them, and let them hear Thy gospel, and find it Thy power unto salvation! For why should Thy people perish for lack of knowledge?'

On Thursday morning we stood two hours in the streets before we set out of town. We marched to Easingwold that day; and when we were drawn up in the street, the people perceived me to be the Methodist preacher they had read of in the newspapers. They told one another, and

flocked about me, as if the soldiers had brought a monster into the town.

When we had stayed near an hour in the street, I and five more were billeted at one house, where the people were so poor they had not six seats for us to sit on, nor any beds; so we came back to the officers' quarters, and they ordered four of us to another house.

God gave me to speak plainly to them, and several of their neighbours who came to see the Methodist. And then they said, 'If this be the Methodist doctrine, we pray God we may have it preached in this town; for hundreds would be glad to hear you.'

In the evening the head man of the town came in. He was a professed Papist, but was a moral, honest man, and bore a good character in his neighbourhood. He asked me many questions, and God enabled me to answer him to his satisfaction. Indeed, I never saw a man of his rank so teachable and humble: his gold lace did not make him above listening to the gospel: he seemed a man of sound reason, as well as of a liberal education. I spoke near an hour to prove the doctrine of justification by faith, and that both from the Old and the New Testament. I showed the fruits of that justifying faith, and the necessity of every man's having it, that he may escape the damnation of hell. The word had such an effect upon him that his eyes betrayed the tenderness of his heart; and when I ended, he said, 'I think no man in his senses would dare to hinder you from instructing sinners in the

way of salvation. For my own part, I shall be glad to see you at liberty; and if you get clear of these men, and come again this way, I would have you call on me.'

I was amazed to find such a man among the Papists, having met with very few, either teachers or hearers, of our own Church but what hold Popish principles ten times stronger than this man, who calls himself a Papist. When he went away, he forced two shillings into my hand, which I would have returned, telling him I received no money, and needed none; but he would not take it again, saying he could afford it, and I might have occasion for them on my journey. O God, be merciful to him that gives a cup of cold water to Thy servants!

Next morning at two the drum beat for us to march out of the town. By eleven on Friday we got to Northallerton, and by twelve settled in quarters. I went into the market-place, and spoke to those I found there of the way of salvation; I hope not in vain. Afterwards, as I was sitting alone, there came a shopkeeper, who said if I would go to his house he would give me a glass of any liquor I pleased to drink. I told him I did not drink any strong liquor. 'Well but,' said he, 'I desire your company, if you please, for half an hour.' I went to his house, and drank tea with him and his family, and spake plainly to them. They received my exhortation with thankfulness, and said, 'We have heard much of you, but never heard any of you before. Several of you have passed through this town, and we

wondered they have never preached here. If you come again, we hope you will call and see us.' I gave them a book, and returned to my quarters.

Next morning at one the drum beat for us to march, and we got to Darlington by nine. Here I was known to several, and by them made known to almost all the town. Many came to my quarters to talk with me; and others sent for me. Whence this famine in the land? I find the people hunger after the word, as if there were no Bibles in the nation.

We rested here on Sunday, and I had many to see me. When they heard what our doctrine was, they cried, 'It is a shame to send a man for a soldier for speaking the truth: for, let all men say what they will, this is the gospel of Jesus Christ.'

In the evening one of the officers came to me, and said, 'Well, sir, why were you not at church to-day?' I answered, 'I was, sir; and if you had been there, you might have seen me; for I never miss going when I have an opportunity.' 'Well, sir,' he added, 'have you preached since you came hither?' 'Not publicly yet,' I replied. He swore he wished I would, that he might punish me severely. 'But, sir,' I told him, 'if you do not repent and leave off that habit of swearing, you will be worse punished than you are able to punish me.' He replied, 'I will make you mind your fire-lock, and leave off your preaching.' 'Yes, sir,' I answered, 'when I leave off speaking.'

This was he that put me in prison at York for preaching. As Saul hunted David, so has this man hunted my soul; but I trust the same God that delivered David will deliver me from cruel men. He called for one of the soldiers, from whose hat he took the cockade, and putting it in mine, swore he would make me wear it. This caused a sore temptation to arise in me, to think that an ignorant wicked man should thus torment me in the street and prison, and I was able to tie his head and heels together. I found an old man's bone in me; but the Lord lifted up a standard, when anger was coming in like a flood, else I should have wrung his neck to the ground, and set my foot upon him; which would have brought reproach upon the gospel, and wounded my own soul. But God is good to me; for He showed me the danger, and delivered me from it in a moment. Then I could look upon him with pity, and pray for him from the ground of my heart. I gave several books away in this town also; which we left the next morning.

I was much surprised at the good-nature of the soldiers in all this march; for I believe twenty offered to carry the gun for me, or anything else I had. God, I found, supported me wonderfully in all these trials; for I could travel fifteen or twenty miles fasting, as well as those who ate and drank two or three times by the way. Surely man doth not live by bread alone; but the Lord is the strength of Israel, the Defender of all them that put their trust in Him. O God, be Thou my guide unto death!

We got to Durham by nine on Monday [June 11]; but, in our way, we had a river to cross, and were obliged to wade through it. The day was very hot; so that I had sweat much, and caught cold immediately. I found myself much out of order when we got to Durham, and desired I might lie down a little. Corporal W. lay down with me, and fell asleep. At twelve I awoke suddenly, as if some man had called me, and said to the corporal, 'I must go to the market-place directly, for what I know not, neither which way to go to it.' 'Nor I,' he said; 'but I will go with you, and we can inquire the way.' Accordingly, we did; and just as we got thither, my brother Westell was inquiring for me among the soldiers. 'Well,' said Mr. W., 'I never saw such a thing in my life, that you should thus awake, and come to meet your friend the minute he came to seek for you.'

We were much comforted together. He told me that Mr. John Wesley would be at Durham soon after four o'clock. I gave God thanks for that news. We went to a common about a mile from the town, and there we met Mr. Wesley.[1] My heart rejoiced to see him; and great reason have I to give God thanks that I ever saw him who was an instrument in God's hand of plucking me as a brand out of the fire. And I have found him God's messenger for my good ever since.

We came to the sign of the Angel, and had some conversation together. He exhorted me to watch and pray; and did not doubt but my captivity

[1] See Wesley's *Journal*, June 11, 1744.

would turn to the glory of God, and the furtherance of the gospel. At six I went to answer my call, and Mr. Wesley went into the Minster.

Afterwards I and Thomas Beard, my fellow prisoner, met Mr. Wesley and our brother Errington, and went with them to the inn, and stayed till nine. Mr. Wesley said, 'Brother Nelson, lose no time; speak and spare not; for God hath work for you to do in every place where your lot is cast: and when you have fulfilled His good pleasure, He will break your bonds in sunder, and we shall rejoice together.' When we had prayed together, we commended each other to the grace of God, and so parted in body, but not in spirit.

Next morning the drum beat at one, and we were called up in the market-place, and caused to stand till three, and then marched off for Sunderland, which we reached by nine. When we were brought up into the town, I heard several of the inhabitants say one to another, 'That is the Methodist mentioned in the newspapers; for his look is not like other men's.' O my God, why am I and my fellows become men that are wondered at?

While we stood, a landlord came to us, and said, 'Sir, I wish you would quarter at my house; for I expect two, and shall be glad to have you for one, and whom you choose for a comrade.' I chose Corporal W., and asked for a billet, as the man desired, but could not get it; yet I believe we got the best quarters we could in Sunderland. Thus I see, if we acknowledge God in all our ways, He will direct our paths.

When I went to exercise, many came to see me, and I fell into discourse with them, but could get no hold on them ; for they assented and consented to all I said, and were so full of what the world calls good manners that all I spake was written as on the sand, though I talked with them several days. Yet some, I trust, will be mindful of their everlasting welfare.

On Saturday night I was ordered to stand sentry on the Sunday following ; but I desired I might stand another day, or pay for my guard. I believe ten men offered to stand for me, but all in vain ; for the ensign, who had showed hatred against me all along, was the officer of the guard that day ; and he protested he would make me do it myself. I asked, 'Sir, what have I done, that I cannot have the same liberty as another man?' He answered, 'You love the church too well ; and I will keep you from it, and make them go who do not like to go!' Keep me, O my God, from all anger, or ill-will! for this man is set to prove me. I went to the guard-house, and many came to talk with me; but I did not stand sentry till six on Monday morning. The ensign saying in the street I should not go to church because I loved it drew many of the people to me ; and will turn, I am persuaded, to the furtherance of the gospel.

The week after Mr. M. came. He had heard what the ensign had done, and came to me, and asked me how I did ; and said, 'I am informed Mr. A. hindered you from going to church ; but, I will assure you, you shall not be hindered again

as long as you are with us.' I have found something of good in this man ever since I knew him. He will hear reason, and seems to make a conscience both of his words and actions. I was near an hour in his chamber, and he asked me of the principal points of our doctrine. I made them as plain to him as I could; and he heard me with great candour, and said he had no fault at all to find with it. He told me, 'The first time that ever I saw you, I saw you were no vagrant, but it would be a scandal to all who were concerned in sending or receiving such a one; for the Act of Parliament does not reach such as you. But the rest of the officers said they could not help it; for you were delivered to us as a soldier by the justices, and they are the rogues.' 'No, sir,' I answered, 'the justices are in no fault; for I was never before one of them yet.' He said, 'Who sent you then?' I replied, 'The commissioners.' 'What evidence had they against you?' 'The accusation against me by the constable's deputy was, "He preaches to the people"; and he also confessed that he knew no other evil of me.' 'Well, but the Act of Toleration clears you from that being a crime. What, had you no man to speak for you?' 'Yes, several were ready; but none were suffered to do it. Neither were the papers regarded which my honest neighbours and some gentlemen sent on my behalf; for one of the commissioners was the parson of our parish, and he was the evidence against me, and they said they would hear no other.'

'Nay,' said Mr. M., 'it is no wonder they treated you so, if the priest was concerned; for they have been at the head of all persecutions for religion which have been since the world began. I see them so wicked that I do not mind religion at all. But this is my religion: I believe there is one God, and that Christ His Son died for the world; I strive to do honestly to all men; and to do a good turn to the meanest, if I can. And I think my religion is better than theirs, who preach one thing and do another; for I have seen so much of them that, I assure you, I would hear you as soon as any in the land.'

He said he should like to read some of our books; so I made him a present of *An Earnest Appeal, The Character of a Methodist,* and the sermon, 'Awake, thou that sleepest.' He has since told me that he has read them, and likes them well.

This day he procured me a furlough to Newcastle for seven days: and I found I did not go up without the Lord; for my soul and those of the people were refreshed with the love of God. Several of the soldiers came to hear me preach, and gave great attention to the things which were spoken. I found great freedom to speak to the children whom God has called out of the evil world to serve Him in this place. Watch over them, O my God, for good; and be Thou their guide unto death!

On Tuesday my time was out to go back. I preached at Painshaw in the afternoon, to an attentive congregation, and got to Sunderland by

seven at night. This week I received a letter from Mr. Charles Wesley, stating that the E[arl] of S[tair] had assured Lady Huntingdon that I should be set at liberty in a few days. I said, 'The Lord hath not forgotten to be gracious; for He hath taken my cause in hand, and it shall turn to His glory; for He alone hath done the work, when all human means seem to fail.' My enemies cried, 'We have made his bonds strong, and none can deliver him out of our snare; for we have put it out of the officers' power to discharge him for any price.' Lord, I beseech Thee, open their eyes, and let them see the snare which Satan hath made for their souls, and escape by speedy repentance and faith in Thy blood.

This week I was much out of health by the surfeit I got in marching; but found present ease by being blooded. The week following I was sent for by the captain to the store-house; and he insisted on my going, though I was so ill. When I came there, he and three more officers came and asked me how I did. I told them; and they said, 'Here is a good coat for you, to keep you from the cold, that you may recover your health.' I said, 'I have coats enough, if that will do: I need none of yours.' They said they would make me wear it, and all other clothing belonging to a soldier. I answered, 'You may array me as a man of war, but I shall never fight.' They asked me, 'What is your reason?' My answer was, 'I cannot see anything in this world worth fighting for. I want neither its riches nor honours, but the honour that cometh

from God only; I regard neither its smiles nor its frowns; and have no business in it, but to get well out of it.'

Then they ordered the sergeant to pull off my coat, and put a red one on me. When he had done it, they turned me round and rejoiced over me. I said, 'You see the Scripture cannot be broken, where it saith, "If they do this in the green tree, what will they do in the dry?"' 'What do you mean by that?' they asked. I answered, 'The soldiers took Jesus, and stripped Him, and put a scarlet robe upon Him, and mocked Him, as you have treated me, His servant, this day, for speaking His words. He, indeed, hath the greater condemnation who delivered me into your hands; but I pray God forgive you all.' These words turned their countenances and behaviour towards me, and one of them laboured much from that time to find some way for me to be set at liberty.

During my three weeks' illness many of the brethren and sisters from Newcastle, Biddick, and Painshaw came to see me; and God was pleased at that time to give some the knowledge of salvation by the remission of their sins, and to comfort all our hearts with His love. Oh may we ever keep His commandments, that we may continue in His love; even as He kept His Father's commandments, and continued in His love!

On Friday, July 27, John Graham, of Sunderland, came to me with an open letter in his hand, and said, 'Come, my friend, I have good news for thee: God hath heard the prayers of His

people in thy behalf, and sent thee deliverance. Here, read this letter, which the major hath sent to the captain on thy account.' It was on this wise: 'I have received an order from the Earl of S[tair] to discharge John Nelson, who was pressed from Birstall, the West Riding of Yorkshire: therefore take the arms and clothing from him, which he has received, and let me know if he has had any pay since he came, and send him to me with a furlough.' Accordingly I delivered all things I had belonging to them to Lieutenant M., who said he was glad that I was released, and wished me well wheresoever I went. I had a furlough given me, and set out in the afternoon with some that were come from Newcastle to see me; and got there by seven.[1]

All the society gave God thanks on my behalf as soon as they saw me; for they had knowledge of my deliverance before I had. Next morning I went to the major's quarters about nine. When I had waited about an hour, I was ordered to come at half an hour past eleven. I did so,

[1] 'This injured man was not set at liberty because of any acknowledged injustice or illegality in his impressment. He was liberated by a substitute, who was hired to take his place, the money being, in all probability, contributed by the Methodists of London, at the instigation of Mr. Charles Wesley; who says in his *Journal*, under date of June 6, 1744, "Toward the end of my discourse at the chapel, Mr. Erskine was sent to receive a soldier, brought by William Shent to redeem John Nelson. He immediately took him to Lord Stair, and got a discharge for John Nelson. Our brother Downes also we received out of the mouth of the lion. Our prayers return thick upon us"' (*Life of Charles Wesley*, vol. i. p. 385, edit. 1841). Charles Wesley's *Journal*, May 14, 1744: 'We prayed mightily for our dear brother Nelson, pressed for a soldier, and a prisoner in York.'

and waited another hour; then the major called to me, and bade me come at half an hour after two, and he would speak to me. I came again as he ordered me; and when I had stayed near an hour, one of the captains called to me, and said, 'The major is gone to dine with the mayor of the town, and you will hardly see him to-night; but you will be sure to find him to-morrow morning.' I told him that would not do for me; for my business was not to be done on the Sabbath.

Near six in the evening I saw the major going along the street, and followed him to his lodgings. He said, 'I have an order from Lord S[tair] to discharge you.' He sent for the adjutant, and ordered him to bring two printed discharges with him. He came, and three more of the officers with him, and filled up the discharge. When he had done, he said, 'I wish all the men in our regiment would behave as well as Mr. Nelson has done since he has been amongst us: it would be better for us and them too.' Then our lieutenant said, 'Indeed he has done much good since he came amongst us: for we have not had one-third of the cursing and swearing in the regiment which we had before he came; and he has given me several private exhortations, and some of their books; and I thank him for them, and for his advice, for they are good.' Then the major said, 'I wish I had a regiment of such men as he is in all respects, save that one, his refusing to fight: I would not care what enemy I had to meet, or where my lot was cast.' 'Sir, if you fear God,' I said, 'you have no need to fear

anything else : for they that fear Him depart from evil, and seek to do His will, and not their own ; they know that in His hand are the issues of life and death ; therefore they fear not him that can kill the body only, but Him who can destroy both body and soul in hell. And every one that has this fear is truly wise ; but he that dare commit sin, his wisdom is the foolishness of folly ; for he is pulling destruction on his own head, and fitting himself as fuel for hell-fire. But he that is wise unto salvation is bold as a lion, and is more noble than to contend for the honour which cometh of men ; for, having bread to eat, and raiment to put on, he knows he has all this world can afford him. He pities the great ones of the earth who feed on husks, and can be content with the title of right honourable, while, by sin, they debase themselves even down to hell : but by these things the god of this world blinds their eyes, so that very few of them see the way to heaven, as it is pointed out in the Word of God.'

'Well,' said the major, 'if you be so scrupulous about fighting, what must we do ?' I answered, 'It is your trade ; and if you had a better, it might be better for you.' 'But somebody,' he replied, 'must fight.' I said, 'If all men lived by faith in the Son of God, wars would be at an end.' 'That is true,' he answered : 'if it were so, we should learn war no more.'

'But there is one thing,' said he, 'I desire to know : tell me, do you make your sermons ready before you go to preach, or do you speak off-hand ?' 'I do not study what to say, but speak

as the Spirit of God enables me.' 'Well,' said he, 'I cannot tell what you mean by the Spirit of God.' 'The more is the pity,' I answered, 'that you should have lived so long in the world, and know nothing of God yet. For we do not know God but by His own Spirit given unto us; and till we have received that Spirit, we are without God in the world: and no man can have this gift, and not know it; for thus saith the Lord Jesus, "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you." So that, if God be true, we must know that Christ is in us, or we are none of His. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God: but if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His"—he is no Christian, no more than a Turk or Pagan, unless he has the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead, to raise him in this world from the death of sin.'

Here one of the captains spake: 'You said, one day, "If we have not the Spirit of God, we are dead while we live."' 'Did I so?' 'Yes, you did.' 'Then I will prove it, both from the doctrine of the Church of England (of which I profess myself a member), and from the Word of God.' God gave me to speak plainly from both for about twenty minutes; none contradicting me, but they both stood as dumb men.

Then the major said, 'Here is such a discharge for you as I never gave before but once'; and put it into my hand. I told them, 'I have now delivered my own soul, and am pure from the blood of you all: for I have not spared either

poor or rich, since I came among you, but have set life and death before you all, as you came in my way. I have declared unto you that the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God; and contrariwise, the blessed state of them that repent, and obey the gospel of Christ our Saviour; and I pray God to give you all to understand the things which belong to your everlasting peace, and bless you in turning every one of you from your iniquities; then shall we meet another day to part no more.' The major said, 'I wish you well wherever you go: for I believe you Methodists are a well-meaning people'; and so said they all. I gave them a book, and took my leave of them.

I went to the room, and preached that night, and had several of the soldiers to hear me, who gave attention to what I said. Then I took my leave of them; but some of them wept, and desired me to pray for them, and said, 'We are glad you are set at liberty, but sorry to part with you.' I commended them to God, and the word of His grace, and trust they will mind the exhortation, and become soldiers of Jesus Christ.

On the 28th day of July I was set at liberty to go wheresoever I thought was most for God's glory, who has delivered me from my bonds; for He hath done the work, and to Him the glory is due. What am I that He should care for me? But He is a God that heareth prayer; and the cries of His people inclined Him to take my cause in hand. Praise the Lord, O my soul,

who hath kept thee in all thy trials, and hath not suffered thee to faint in sore temptation!

Now I find the words true which Mr. John Wesley wrote to me at York: 'Well, my brother, is the God whom you serve able to deliver you; and do you find Him faithful to His word? Is His grace still sufficient for you? I doubt it not. He will not suffer you to be weary or faint in your mind. But He had work for you to do which you knew not of, and thus His counsel was to be fulfilled. Oh lose no time! Who knows how many souls God may by this means deliver into your hands? Shall not all these things be for the furtherance of the gospel? And is not the time coming when we shall cry out together, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us"?'

On the 29th of July, 1744, the day after I was released from my captivity, I preached at the room in Newcastle; and the power of the Lord was present. Several more were converted that week, and my own soul refreshed amongst them.

The week after I set out for home; and brother Tinkler assisted me with a horse as far as Ferry Hill, where we commended each other to the grace of God, and I set out on foot.

The day after I met brother Ash and two more near Boroughbridge, coming to meet me with my mare. We stopped, and sang praise together unto God, who had broken my bonds and preserved me in many dangers.

It was given out for me to preach at Leeds that

night ; and I preached in an open yard to a large company of rich and poor, who did not attend our preaching before I was sent for a soldier. Thus we see that what the enemies of the Lord Jesus do to hinder His gospel helps to enlarge His kingdom. So it is that He turns the fierceness of men to His praise, and the remainder of it He restrains ; for not one in Leeds opened his mouth against me, but hundreds said they were glad to see me at liberty again.

When I got home, I found my wife and children well ; and we praised God together. But when I came to converse with the people, my soul was distressed within me ; for those that had showed me great love before I went, by their behaviour and countenance, now seemed to wish I had not come back ; for Mr. Viney,[1] who had been with the Moravians, had got among them in my absence, and had preached to them another gospel. They now told me they did not want the law or work-preaching any more, but that they wanted to be fed ; and that neither Mr. Wesley nor I knew how to build up souls as well as Mr. Viney did. But I found that they were built up in an unholy faith ; for they said, to tell people that they must be holy in this world was Mr. Wesley's error and mine, and we kept souls in bondage by preaching as we did. Some of them, indeed, showed their liberty by trampling under foot the law of God and man.

When I saw such havoc made among the flock

[1] Charles Wesley's *Journal*, Oct. 25, 1744 : 'I met the Birstall society, whom Mr. Viney had almost quite perverted.'

by his soft words and fair speeches, my soul was distressed within me, so that I could not eat my bread. I threw myself on the ground, and wished for death, saying, 'Lord, why hast Thou suffered me to come back to see this evil?'

When I preached, many stood like stocks or stones, and others smiled at one another; so that my preaching was like a feather thrown against a rock, or as water spilt upon the ground, except to a few strangers who were affected. I said, 'Woe is me! for my children flee from me, as if I had brought the plague amongst them!'

I humbled myself before God, and begged for light that I might know His will: and I opened the Book on these words, 'Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham for our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.' I went out, and stood upon a table, and preached from these words to a large congregation, who seemed to be as a people that never heard the gospel before; and there began to be a trembling amongst them, when many fell to the ground, and cried out, 'Lord, save, or I perish!' Many came to me weeping, and said, 'We have been deluded by the German song. Oh pray for us, that God may give us back that tender conscience which we have lost since you

left us!' Then Mr. Viney went out of the congregation, hung down his head, and owned us no more. But my soul revived again; for sinners were converted, and others restored to the simplicity of the gospel who had been wise above what is written. But some continue to this day in their 'happy-sinnership.' I met with one of them the other day, so drunk that he could not keep the cart-road. I asked him what he thought of himself now, if death were to seize him in that wretched condition. He said that 'he was not afraid to die, for he was as his Saviour would have him to be; and if He would have him to be holy, He would make him so; but he was a poor sinner, and he hoped to be so to eternity.' He said, 'You and John Wesley are enemies to the Lamb; for you want people to be holy here. But the Lamb shall have the honour of saving me: I will not offer to save myself, like you Pharisees.' I cried out, 'Lord, keep me from that delusion!'

After some time I went to York, and found the seed sown in my captivity had sprung up; for nineteen had found peace with God, and twice as many were under convictions, though they had no one to instruct them in my absence. But the little books I left them, viz., the sermon on 'Awake, thou that sleepest,' and 'Salvation by Faith,' and the *Extract from the Homilies*, and the *Nature and Design of Christianity*, had been of great use to them. Oh what good might be done, if these books were spread through the land!

Soon after[1] Mr. Wesley sent for me to London, and I found my soul blessed in speaking to the people; and many came to hear out of curiosity when they heard it was the man that had been in prison; and several were convinced of the truth they heard.

When I was at London, I received a letter from Sunderland, wherein I was desired to go and preach there. Two men who had conversed with me when I was captive there had found the Lord; and they said that their souls panted for the salvation of their neighbours. So I see that God leads the blind by a way they know not; for I thought all that I had said there was as water spilt on the ground. But the Lord confirms His own word, when we see little outward appearance of it. Oh how wonderful are Thy works, O Lord! what a great fire is kindled by a little spark in that place! Now I see that the wise man's advice is good, where he saith, 'Sow thy seed in the morning, and in the evening withhold not thy hand; for thou knowest not which shall prosper, this or that.'

In my return from London I preached at Nottingham Cross to a large congregation, most of whom behaved very well, except a few who had prepared squibs to throw in my face; but three of them were burnt with the fire that they intended for me, and went away and left me to finish my discourse quietly. When I had done, there came a sergeant to the Cross to me, and fell down on his knees, and said, 'For the Lord's

[1] Sept., 1744.

sake, pray for me; for I came on purpose to pull you down; but the dread of God fell upon me (when I saw those burnt with the squibs that they intended to have thrown in your face), and your words came as a sword to my heart; and I am convinced that you are God's servant. I never served either God or my king as I ought to do; but I hope I shall begin to lead a new life from this hour.' This being in the presence of all the people, it seemed to season what I had said to them. As I was preaching, one Stephen Dickson, and two more preachers, came and stood awhile. They then spoke aloud, and said, 'Why hear ye him? For he is as legal and blind as the two Wesleys themselves.'

When I got home, I found the people in a prosperous way, and the greatest part of them quite delivered from the Antinomian principles that they had fallen into during my captivity; and the Lord had increased them in grace and number. To Him be the glory given!

Soon after I went to Newcastle,[1] and laboured there about three months, and had an opportunity to visit Sunderland. I preached at the Cross to the greatest part of the town, who behaved well, and stood all the time, though the snow was eight or nine inches deep. I went there as often as I could; and God visited many with His salvation there, and at Painshaw and Biddick, who blessed God that I had been sent among them. They said that they would pray

[1] Charles Wesley's *Journal*, Dec. 12, 1744: 'John Nelson came.'

for our minister, who was the cause of my coming; for they were more beholden to him than to me; and, let him intend what he would, they had reason to bless God in his behalf. So it is evident God hath His way in the whirlwind, and His path in the great waters.

On my return to Leeds, I found that the Lord had greatly blessed the labours of Jonathan Reeves and John Bennet; several being converted by their preaching, both there and at Birstall.

I was afterwards ordered to Bristol. In my way I called at Nottingham; and as I was preaching, a mob came into the house, and made a noise as if they had been in a cock-pit, so that my voice could not be heard for some time. When they were silent, I began to speak; and one of them came behind me, and filled my mouth with dirt out of the kennel. I never felt myself so near being choked in my life; but when I had gotten the dirt out, I spoke again. The ringleader of them turned about, and said, 'Let him alone; for he is right, and we are wrong; and if any one of you touch him, I will knock you down.' He guarded me to my lodgings, and bore many blows for me: he desired me to pray for him, that he might not rest till he had found peace with God; for he was sure he had fought against the truth, but by grace he would do so no more.

I found peace at Wednesbury; and several who had been persecutors were converted, and were content to bear the reproach of the gospel. Oh

what a good God have we to deal with! It is plain, whoever turn at His reproof, He will pour out His Spirit upon them, and receive them into His family, after all they have done to provoke Him.

I found peace at all the places in my way to Bristol; and my soul was refreshed among the people in that city. Here, and in some parts of Somersetshire and Wiltshire, I spent four months. Several were awakened at Paulton, Coleford, Oakley, Shepton Mallet, Road, and Bearfield. So God doth work, and none can hinder; though the instruments be ever so weak, if He command it, a worm shall shake the earth.

While I was in these parts, the rebels entered our land; and many trembled for fear of the calamities that were expected at their coming, and attended the word and prayer, though they used not to attend before: but after the Lord had put His hook into the rebels' jaws, and turned them back by the way they came, many were as careless about their souls as ever.

A little before I left Bristol, I received a letter from Mr. Charles Wesley, containing only the following words: 'My brother, you must watch and pray, labour and suffer. My spirit is with you. You will shortly be wanted in Yorkshire. Farewell.' Indeed God hath made him a true prophet to me: for I see as much need to watch and pray as ever I did; and I believe I shall, as long as I am in this howling wilderness; and to exert all my strength in labouring to persuade sinners to flee from the wrath to come, for I see myself a debtor to all men.

I remember, about eight months before I was pressed for a soldier, Mr. C. Wesley was preaching near my house, in the open street, and said in his preaching, 'Before I shall come to preach here again, the devil will be permitted to cast some of you into prison; but it shall turn to the glory of God, and to the furtherance of the gospel.' I little thought then that the cloud would burst on my head: but when it did, his words were a support to me in my trials.

When I left Bristol, I met with many sufferings. At almost every place where I came to preach, mobs were raised, as if they were determined to kill me and all God's children, in a kind of thanksgiving because the rebels were conquered.[1] Oh what stupid creatures are men in their carnal state!

When I got to Nottingham, I preached to a peaceable congregation. About half an hour after I had done, as I and four or five more were sitting by the fire, the constable, with a mob at his heels, came rushing into the house, and said, 'Where is the preacher?' I said, 'I am he, sir.' He replied, 'You must go with me before the mayor.' I said, 'Where is your warrant?' He replied, 'My staff is my warrant. Come, lads, help me; for I will make him go before the mayor.' I said, 'I am not afraid to go before him; but it is your business to take up that swearer: you hear there is another that swears; and if you don't take

[1] To understand this it is necessary to remember that the Wesleys were popularly reported to be Papists and secret agents of the Pretender.

them up, it is in my power to make you pay forty shillings for not doing your duty.' He regarded not what I said, but hauled me away. When he had got almost to the mayor's house, a gentleman-like man said, 'Constable, where are you going with him?' He said, 'To the mayor.' He replied, 'Pray don't; for the mayor is their friend, and says he will put any one that disturbs them into the house of correction: therefore carry him before Alderman H[ornbuckle], and he will do for him.' 'Then we must turn another way,' said he. But I said, 'I insist upon going before the mayor.' But he replied, 'I will make you go where I please.' I said, 'You told me you must carry me before the mayor: I find you are a strange officer, to encourage swearing and tell lies yourself.' Then the mob shouted, and cried, 'Help us to guard the Methodist preacher to the house of correction.'

By that time we got to the alderman's house, there were several hundreds gathered together; and when we came there, he said, 'Whom have you brought, constable?' To me he said, 'I wonder you can't stay in your own places; you might be convinced by this time that the mob of Nottingham will never let you preach quietly in this town.' I replied, 'I beg pardon, sir, I did not know before now that this town was governed by a mob; for most such towns are governed by magistrates.' He blushed, and said, 'Do you think that we will protect Wesley and you, a pack of you? No. I believe you are the cause of all the commotions that have been in

the land.' I replied, 'Sir, can you prove that one man who is joined to us did assist the Pretender with either men, money, or arms?' He said, 'It hath been observed that there was always such a preaching, brawling people before any judgement came upon the land.' I replied, 'That is the goodness of God towards the people, for sending His messengers to warn them to repent, that they may escape His judgements here, and the torments of the damned hereafter. Sir, you may as well say that it was through Jeremiah that the Chaldeans destroyed the temple, and took the inhabitants of Jerusalem captives, because he told them it would be so if they did not repent and turn to God. No, sir, it is not for praying and preaching that evil comes on a land, but for swearing and cursing, drunkenness and debauchery; for oppressing the poor, and loving pleasure more than God; and for denying the Lord that bought us. These are the people that bring the sword, pestilence, and famine into the land.' The constable said, 'Do you think we will take warning by such fellows as you?' I said, 'If you will not, you must feel the blow; for if there be not a reformation in the land, God will pour out His judgements upon man and beast. Therefore, I warn you all to look unto the rod; for it is appointed to them that disobey the gospel.' Then the alderman said, 'So, so; you must not preach here. I verily believe you are a good man.' Then he said, 'Constable, I will not send this man to the house of correction. I think, as you keep a public-house, you may let

him lie there to-night; for he is on his journey.' The constable said, 'I beg that he may not be at my house.' 'Well, then,' said he, 'he may go to Mary White's, where he came from.' I spoke a few more words to him, and wished him a good night. He said, 'Mr. Nelson, I wish you well, wherever you go.'[1]

When I had got into the street, I do not know but there might be a thousand people; but I saw not one that I knew; therefore I went and stood under a lamp, that my acquaintances might see me. The alderman came to the door, and said to the constable, 'Take care of Mr. Nelson, that no one molest him: see him safe to Mary White's.' The constable seemed much ashamed, and did as he was ordered. Then the man that advised him to carry me before the alderman came to me, and said, 'Thy nimble tongue has delivered thee at this time.' I said, 'No, sir, it is my God, who hath the hearts of all men in His hand.'

When we got to Mary White's, we sang a hymn, and gave praise to God, and prayed for our enemies, and recommended each other to God's care and protection; and we had a comfortable meeting at five the next morning.

When I got home, I found all things in a comfortable way; and the Lord added many to the number of His children that winter, and several died in the triumph of faith. 'Wonderful art Thou, O Lord, in all Thy works: and as Thou art in majesty, so art Thou in mercy!'

[1] See Nelson's letter to Wesley, April 22, 1746, in *Journal*, under date.

One day, I happened to fall in company with a gentleman that was called one of the chief teachers in Israel, who began to ridicule Mr. Wesley and all that labour with him; saying, 'They are a short-sighted, ignorant set of people; neither are they willing to be instructed in the truths of the gospel.' I said, 'Sir, I am one of them, and I am open to conviction. Show me our error, and I hope, by grace, to forsake it.' He said, 'You all deny the faith delivered to the saints, in denying election and reprobation.' I said, 'I do not know that that is the faith of the gospel; for the Apostle Paul saith, "It was not written for Abraham's sake alone, that faith was counted to him for righteousness, but for our sakes, if we believe in Him that raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." I think, therefore, that this is the faith of the gospel—that I with my heart believe that Jesus Christ died for my sins, and rose again for my justification; that He died for me, that His life might be made manifest in my mortal flesh; that I might not live to myself, but to Him who died for me. And this faith kindles in the hearts of those who receive it a flame of love to God, and to every soul of man; and I would not give a straw for anything called faith short of this. The same apostle saith that his commission to the people and to the Gentiles was, "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; that they might receive forgiveness of

sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in Jesus Christ"; but there is not one word of reprobation in his commission; and if any come to preach another gospel, let him be accursed.' He stormed at me, and called me a muddy-headed creature several times. I answered, 'My head is muddy, or your doctrine is unclean. If you clear God, and do not make Him a liar, nor guilty of perjury, nor the author of all sin, then I may think as you do.' He asked, 'What do you mean?' I replied, 'He hath said several times that He is no respecter of persons; but you have given Him the lie many times since I came into your company. And you have made Him guilty of perjury: for He swears by His own life that He hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner; and you have affirmed that it is God's pleasure to leave the greatest part of mankind to an unmerciful devil, to govern them here, and to torment them hereafter; nay, you affirm that it is His good pleasure to damn infants from their mother's womb. O sir, beware what you say against the God of love! for you have made Him worse than Moloch: by your words, that man is as much doing the will of God that cuts his father's throat, and that ravisheth his own mother, as he that feedeth the hungry, and clotheth the naked! O sir, is this the God that was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself? No, He is loving to every man, and His mercy is over all His works: and St. John saith, "He that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God; for God is

love." ' Then he made a noise like a butcher in the bear-garden. When I could be heard, I said, ' Sir, if ever you preach again, I must look upon you either as a fool or knave.' He asked, ' Why so ? ' I replied, ' You say, the elect were chosen from eternity, and the rest set apart for misery, and that the decree cannot be broken ; and if you think one of the chosen can be lost for want of preaching, or one of the reprobates can be saved by your preaching, you must be void of reason. And you must be something worse, if you believe the thing is fixed, and that preaching will aggravate the torments of the lost, and that the greatest part of your hearers are lost, who help to maintain you as a gentleman only to increase their damnation.' He looked at me with a stern countenance, and said, ' You are as bad as Wesley himself.' I replied, ' Sir, why do you find fault ? If what you say be true, God hath decreed me to think as I do. And how can I break this decree ? ' He said, ' I hate to hear you talk so.' I answered, ' Do you want God to break His decree ? ' Then he went away in a rage.

Another preacher of the same sort heard of our dispute, and told me he would put a question to me which would drive me from inherent righteousness ; viz., ' Whether the white raiment that those appeared in before the throne of heaven was not the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ ? ' I said, ' No, sir.' But he affirmed it was. I then said, ' It is almost blasphemy, in my opinion, to say so.' He said, ' What do you mean ? ' I

answered, 'The Scripture saith that "they came out of great tribulation; and washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." I never heard that His life was stained by sin; neither man nor devil could accuse Him thereof. His righteousness had no need of washing: it is blasphemy to say that it had. For shame, go home and read the Scriptures, and you will see it is the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses from all sin, but cloaks none. When a soul appears in that company, it is not like a dunghill covered with snow, but really pure; and is, by the power of Jesus Christ's Spirit, restored to the image of God, in which it was at first created; and then, and not till then, can it enter in at the gates of the New Jerusalem, and join the angels, and archangels, and spirits of just men made perfect, to sing an eternal anthem to the great Three-One.' He said, 'You shall never make me think as Wesley and you do.' I replied, 'If you do not in this world, you will in the next; for if you die defiled and unclean, you must be cast into a lake that burneth with fire and brimstone: so you had better begin now yourself, and advise your hearers to cry out, "Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me, O Lord!" for none but the pure in heart can see God.' He said, 'I do not care what you can say; for my salvation was completed when Christ hung on the cross.' I replied, 'Not so; for He did not repent for you. You must repent for yourself, or eternally perish, after all He hath done and suffered for you; and you must also

perish if you do not believe that He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. Nor was He risen again when He hung on the cross, which yet was a necessary part of the work that He came to do. Nor was He born again for you; for you must be born again, or you can never enter into the kingdom of heaven; and be really made a partaker of the divine nature by regeneration, or you have no more right to call God your Father, or heaven your inheritance, than I have to call King George my father, and his throne mine.' He said, 'You are a strange set of people,' and left me. O my God, take the matter into Thy own hand, and put a stop to that anti-christian doctrine which is spreading as a flood in our land; and give the people to see the truth as it is in Jesus; and create such a hungering and thirsting in them after inward holiness that they may pant as the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, till all that is in them be made holiness to the Lord!

I was in hopes that I had done with that sort of people; but a third came to me soon after, saying, in a rage, 'You are an enemy to the gospel.' I asked, 'Wherein, sir?' He replied, 'In saying that Christ died for all; and in denying imputed righteousness.' I answered, 'Faith in Christ is imputed for righteousness to every soul that believeth; and they are freely forgiven for His sake, received into God's favour and family, and are made partakers of the same Spirit that raised our Lord from the dead; whereby they are enabled to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts,

and to live a godly, righteous, and sober life in this present evil world, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God. In the Scripture sense, these live not, but Christ liveth in them; and He doth actually destroy the works of the devil, and re-instamp the image of God in their souls; and I read of no other qualification to fit a soul for God's company.' He said, 'You are stupid; and so are all they that follow Wesley; but I believe as I say, and so do many better men than either he or you.' I answered, 'If you and all the preachers in England were to believe so, I will not give you credit, unless the word of God *expressly* says that Christ did *not* die for all. But it saith several times that He did die for *all*; but not once that He did *not* die for all; and how you came to be wise above what is written I know not, neither do I want such wisdom.' I added, 'Tell me, sir, did you ever feel the love of God in your own soul? If you did, I appeal to your conscience whether at that time you did not find love to every soul of man. Now, this was not your nature, but the nature of God; and if one drop of the bucket could so swell your soul, what must that ocean be from which it came! But I cannot help thinking that you of that principle never knew God; or, if you had known Him, you have forgotten Him; for you make Him worse than Moloch.' On this he fell into a rage with me. I said, 'Be not angry with me, but rather be consistent with yourself; and if I could believe as you do, I would not have so long troubled the people with

preaching ; for you say, " Not one of them that Christ died for can perish, nor the rest be saved." Then why do you and I beat the air? For Christ will have His, you say, and the devil must have his ; therefore let each have his own quietly, and do not torment the poor creatures before the time.' He then went away in haste, and sent for arguments to those of his own stamp in London to put a stop to universal redemption and inward holiness ; but he never yet brought them to me.

Soon after, I met with a Roman Catholic, who began to condemn all sects and parties, saying they must all perish that die out of the pale of the Church ; that there is but one Church, and that the Church of Rome is it. I replied, ' Whatever the Church of Rome is, you do not belong to Christ's church yet ; for you curse and swear, and get drunk, and break the Sabbath ; and while you continue to do so, you belong to the synagogue of Satan.' But he said, ' Our priests have Peter's power, and could and would forgive the sins of all that belonged to our community.' I answered, ' Not so ; for one wicked man cannot forgive another, nor forgive his own sins. No : it is God that is offended ; and it is He that is offended who must forgive the offender. One rebel cannot forgive another ; it is the king that must forgive both, or both must suffer. You say also that the wafer is the real body, and the wine the real blood, of Christ, after consecration ; then, according to you, whosoever is a partaker of it hath eternal life abiding in him. But

the Scripture saith that "no whoremonger, or drunkard, or blasphemer, hath eternal life abiding in him"; and you know that many of your Church that are partakers of the eucharist are such. Nay, St. Paul tells us, in the fifth chapter of Galatians, of seventeen sorts of sinners that shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Therefore be not deceived, neither cast away the reason God hath given you. Now bring your wafer, and set it before a swine, an ape, or a bear, and they will devour it: how, then, can you dare to say that it is divine? If it be so, these brutes must be raised up at the last day, as well as you.' He gave me bad words; and another of them said if he might have his will on me he would have me boiled in oil; they then left me. O my God, rend away the veil of ignorance from that people, and let all nations see Thy salvation!

On my journey to the place where I was going to preach, I called at a gentleman's house,[1] where was much company; and he insisted I should stay and dine with them. I desired to be excused. He said, 'What is your reason? You have time enough on your hands.' I replied, 'Sir, I don't care to affront you in your own house.' 'What do you mean?' he said. I answered, 'If I affront the gentlemen at your table, it will affront you; and I do not expect

[1] Edward Leeds, Esq., who then resided at Milford Hall, near Ulleskelf. He invited Nelson to dinner, and after it was over accompanied him to the village to protect him from the violence of the mob. For a full account, and for a notable conversion which took place at that meeting, see *Methodist Mag.*, 1827, p. 833.

to sit at the table to-day without hearing the name of the Lord blasphemed, though there be two clergymen in the company; and if I do, I must reprove them, or carry a guilty conscience home, which I will not do for all you have.' He said, 'I insist on your dining with me; and you are welcome to reprove sin; and, if I should be guilty, reprove me first.' I said, 'You, sir, as soon as any one; or I should not love your soul as well as another's.'

When we were seated, I had scarcely time to eat one morsel before I had occasion to reprove; for one gentleman was a Roman Catholic, and he hardly spoke three words, but one was an oath. I said to the master of the feast, 'There is one thing too deep for me; I cannot fathom it.' He asked, 'What is that?' I answered, 'When I see a man endowed with reason, and of a liberal education, run himself out of breath for no prize.' He said, 'What do you mean?' I replied, 'When a man will damn his soul with swearing and cursing, it is as if he ran for no prize. If he damn his soul to gratify his vain and foolish desires, he hath a sort of pleasure, though it is brutish; but the other brings neither pleasure nor credit.' Then said the gentleman, 'Peter swore.' I replied, 'He did so; but when he had done, he went out and wept bitterly; and I do not suppose he ever swore again. Sir, I wish you would do as he did.' He answered, 'Well, I own it is not right to swear; but here are some of your clergy, as you call yourself a Churchman, that will swear as much as I when

they are hunting.' I said, 'Sir, I am sorry to hear that; but it will not justify either you or me, if we swear, because your priest and my minister will swear.' Then another said, 'Do you think that Mr. John Wesley would not swear a vain oath for a hundred pounds?' I answered, 'I believe he would not swear a vain oath to save his neck from the gallows. If I were sure he would, I would turn my back on him for ever.' The Roman Catholic said, 'I neither care what you nor he may say; for hunt I will, and I have as good a pack of fox-dogs as any in the kingdom, and a couple of as good horses to follow them, which do but cost me about two hundred pounds a year; and I can well afford it.' But I replied, 'Sir, how will you answer for spending two hundred pounds a year, when you come to give an account of your stewardship?' He answered, 'It is my own; I am not a steward.' I replied, 'You are but a steward, sir: for "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; so are the cattle on a thousand hills." He says, "The gold is Mine, and the silver is Mine"; and He will say to you, "Thou hast taken My gold and My silver, and spent it on dogs, horses, and fighting-cocks, in the room of feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked; or of being as a husband to the widow, or as a father to the fatherless, or as eyes to the blind, or legs to the lame." O sir, consider it is but a little while before God will say to you, "Come, and give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward!" Then you will wish that all you had

spent in voluptuousness and vain pleasures had been given to the poor and needy.' Then the two clergymen whispered together; and the whisper went round to the Roman Catholic; and he said, 'Why did God make dogs of such a nature, if it were not for gentlemen's diversion?' I answered, 'Who dare say that God made them so?' He said, 'Did not God make them?' 'Yes, sir,' I replied, 'and you too; but not as you are.' He said, 'What do you mean?' I replied, 'When God had finished the creation, He pronounced everything good; and there was no death in any creature. But when sin entered into the world, then death entered into the world by sin. But before man sinned against his Maker, there was nothing in one creature that could take the life of another. No; the hare would as soon have hunted the hound as the hound the hare. At that time, the lamb would as soon have killed the lion as the lion the lamb; and the pigeon the hawk as the hawk the pigeon. But since the fall, the earth is cursed for man's sins, and everything that it produces; nay, it is all a curse to man, till it is sanctified to him by prayer. And I do not believe that you or any who is here go to your knees to desire God to give His blessing on your undertakings, when you go a-hunting, and to enable you to use the hounds and horses to His glory; not believing that you can do anything that will please Him better.' He said, 'I have heard that Wesley had taught you the art of reasoning; and I find he has.' I replied, 'Sir, if you or any man that

is present can disprove what I say, let him do it now.'

After my return to Leeds, I went to Wakefield, and preached to a small but serious congregation.

The next morning I set out for Kirkheaton; and in my way I called to breakfast with a friend in Horbury. Before I had been there half an hour the house was beset with almost the whole town, men, women, and children, who cried out, as with one voice, 'Bring him out, that we may put him into the river.' I went out to them, and said, 'What do you want?' They d——d me, and said, 'You, you Methodist dog.' I replied, 'What have I done to you? I am not going to preach here now.' Then the parson's son swore, 'You shall never preach more; for we will drown you in the river this day.' And I found that almost the whole town had agreed together that all the journeymen and apprentices should leave work as soon as the next preacher came into the town, and put a halter about his neck, and drag him into the river, and drown him, that the town might be quit of them for ever; and the parson's son, as the captain of the mob, had prepared a crazy man to put the halter about my neck: and he stood with one in his hand, and a butcher with a rope to hale me along; but, while my voice could be heard, they had not power to touch me. Then they went to the clerk's house, and got six large handbells, and came and rung them round me, so that my voice could not be heard: and then the madman, who was about six feet high, put the halter to my throat.

But I put my hand between my throat and it, and pushed it back; and the man fell to the ground, as if he had been knocked down with an axe; and the butcher stood trembling, and touched me not. The constable then came, with his staff in his hand; upon which the mob cried, 'Here is the constable; let him come, and he will put the rope on him now; for he will help us.' He came to me, and I said, 'Are you the constable?' He answered, 'Yes, I am; and that I will let you know.' I replied, 'I am glad you are come; and I charge you in the king's name to do your office.' He asked, 'What is my office?' I answered, 'It is to quell this mob, and to deliver me out of their hands; and, if I have done anything contrary to law, to carry me before a magistrate, and let me be punished by the law.' He turned pale, and said, 'Whither are you going?' I answered, 'I was going to the stable to get my horse, but was stopped by this mob.' He bade them be silent, and said, 'Follow me.' He went to the stable, and led out my horse, and held the stirrup, while I got on. Then, after leading me quite through the crowd, he bade me go in the name of the Lord. O my God! hitherto Thou hast helped me![1]

When I got to my place, we had a comfortable meeting; for the power of the Lord was present to heal; and one that had waited long was set at liberty; and all praised the Lord on my behalf,

[1] For the story of the founding and growth of Methodism in Horbury, see Winter No. of *Methodist Recorder*, 1899, p. 60.

for His delivering me from the hands of the ungodly.

I went once more to York, in Passion Week, and preached on Good Friday at Hepworth Moor to a serious, peaceable people ; and gave out that I would preach there on Easter Sunday,[1] at eight in the evening. Then I went to a village about three miles from York, where I preached to a very large and well-behaved congregation.

On Easter Sunday I went to Hepworth Moor at the time appointed, and found two companies of people assembled : the one came to hear the word, and the other to mob. After we had sung a hymn and prayed, I opened my book on these words, 'God having raised up His Son Jesus Christ, sent Him to bless you, in turning every one of you from your iniquities' ; and I went on to prove that this was His business in this present evil world, actually to save all true believers from their sins ; and that it was neither sect, party, nor opinion that made a man a real member of Christ's church ; but the real Christians are those that are saved from their sins by Jesus Christ—from sins both of omission and of commission ; and everything short of this was not Christianity. 'Therefore,' I said, 'be not deceived ; for whosoever is defiled, or unclean, cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, but must be cast into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. And as this day is kept in the remembrance of God's raising His Son up to bless us, let every one cry out, " Lord, bless me, and turn me from my

[1] April 19, 1747.

iniquities!" ' Then a gentleman, a Papist, that brought the rebels to mob, cried out, 'Knock out the brains of that mad dog!' and perfectly gnashed with his teeth. Immediately a shower of stones came, and hit many of the people; and they continued to throw till not one could stand to hear me. Nevertheless, not one stone hit me, though I stood as a mark on the table, when all were fled from me; and I talked to the mob. But, as I was going away, a piece of a brick struck me on the back of my head, and I fell flat on my face, and must have lain for some time had not two men lifted me up; but I could not stand for some time. The blood ran down my back quite into my shoes; and the mob followed me through the city, swearing that they would kill me when they got me out of it. I said unto the Lord, 'Lord, Thou wast slain without the gate, and Thou canst deliver me from the hands of these bloodthirsty men.' When I was got over the bridge, a gentleman came and took me by the hand, saying, 'What is the matter, you bleed so?' Some of the mob answered, 'This is but little to what we will do to him.' Then the gentleman pulled me into his house, and told the mob if they did not disperse immediately some of them should be in the Castle before an hour was at an end. Then they fled away; and he sent for a surgeon to dress my head.

I lay down awhile; and brother Slaton came with my horse, and I rode to Acomb, where I was to have preached at five in the afternoon; but just at that time, there came about ten

young gentlemen—some in the coach, some on the box, and some behind the coach—who began to sing the songs of the drunkards, and to throw rotten eggs at the women.

I and two more were walking in a little field by the house, when there came two big men, one of whom swore, 'Here he is: I will kill him, if there were not another man alive.' I told him that he had not any reason to kill me, for I had done him no wrong, nor any one in that town. Then he pulled off his hat and wig, and gave them to the other man, saying, 'If I do not kill him, I will be d——d.' Then he came as fiercely to me as he could, with an intent to run his head against the pit of my stomach; but I stepped aside, and he pitched on his head. When he got up, I spoke to him again, and asked what I had done amiss to him. He gave me no answer, but ran at me again, and caught hold on the collar of my shirt, which rent in pieces, and he fell down at my feet again. Then he got up, and came to me a third time; and, as I made no resistance, he threw me down, and leaped with his knees on my belly several times, till he had beaten the breath out of me, and set my head a-bleeding again. He then went to the gentlemen that hired him and the other man to kill me, and said, 'Gentlemen, I have killed the preacher: he lies dead in the croft.' And then he took one of our friends, and threw him against the corner of a wall, and broke two of his ribs. The parson's brother said, 'Well, we will see for ourselves; we will not take your word.' Upon which he

and about twenty more came to me; but my breath was come again, and I was turned on my face, and lay bleeding on the ground. One of them said, 'He will get his death if he lie there awhile.' Then they lifted me up, and said, 'We will help you into the house.' When I could speak, I said, 'Your mercy is only to make way for more cruelty. Gentlemen, if I have done anything contrary to the law, let me be punished by the law. I am a subject of King George; and to his law I appeal; and I am willing to go before my Lord Mayor, as he is the king's magistrate.' But they cursed me and the king too, saying he was as bad as we, or he would have hanged us all like dogs before now. One actually d——d him, and said, 'If he were here, we would serve him as bad as you.'

The parson's brother cursed me, and said, 'According to your preaching, you would prove our ministers to be blind guides and false prophets; but we will kill you as fast as you come.' One said, 'If Wesley come on Tuesday, he shall not live another day in this world.' When I got into the street, they set up a huzzah, and a person caught hold on my right hand, and gave me a hasty pluck; at the same time another struck me on the left side of my head, and knocked me down. As I got up, they knocked me down eight times; and when I lay on the ground, not being able to get up, they took me by the hair of my head, and dragged me upon the stones for nearly twenty yards; some kicking me on my thighs and sides with their feet, as the others

dragged me along; and six of them got on my body and thighs, to tread the Holy Spirit out of me, as they said. Then they let me alone a little while, and said one to another, 'We cannot kill him.' One said, 'I have heard that a cat has nine lives; but I think he has nine score.' Another said, 'If he has, he shall die this day.' A third said, 'Where is his horse? for he shall quit the town immediately.' And they said to me, 'Order your horse to be brought to you; for you shall go before we leave you.' I said, 'I will not; for you intend to kill me in private, that you may escape justice. But if you do murder me, it shall be in public; and it may be that the gallows may bring you to repentance, and your souls may be saved from the wrath to come.' Then one of them swore if I would not go he would put me into the draw-well; and they lifted up the lid of the well, and dragged me towards it: but a woman, big with child, stood by the well, and pushed several of them down, so that they could not get me to it. Then two gentlewomen, who came out of the city, called the gentlemen by their names that were striving to put me in; who all let me go, and, turning to the gentlewomen, looked as men confounded. In the meantime some friends got me up, and helped me into the house. Then all the mob set out for the city, singing debauched songs. This was on Easter Sunday.

I heard one of them say, as he got into the coach, 'It is impossible for him to live; and if John Wesley comes on Tuesday, we will kill

him. Then we shall be quite rid of the Methodists for ever; for no one will dare to come if they two be killed.'

When they were gone, I sent for something to sweat me; and I sweat so violently that in the morning my shirt was as if it had been stained with raw beef. But I was not so sore as I expected; for I set out to meet Mr. Wesley, and was enabled to ride forty miles that day.

I met him at Osmotherley, and heard him preach on a tombstone in the churchyard to a large and serious congregation. I found his word to come with power to my soul, and was constrained to cry out, 'O Lord, I will praise Thee for Thy goodness to me; for Thou hast been with me in all my trials; Thou hast brought me out of the jaws of death; and though Thou didst permit men to ride over my head, and didst lay afflictions on my loins, yet Thou hast brought me through fire and water into a wealthy place!' And, indeed, in all my persecutions my soul was kept in peace; so that I felt neither fear nor anger.

So far, Lord, I am Thy witness; for Thou dost give strength for the day according to Thy word, and grace to help in time of need. O my dear Redeemer, how shall I praise Thee as Thou oughtest to be praised? Oh let my life be a living sacrifice to Thee; for it is by Thee alone that I escaped both temporal and eternal death!

When I had told Mr. Wesley of the treatment I had met with, he blessed God for my deliverance. However, I advised him not to go to York at

that time, but to go to Leeds; and God blessed his word to many souls at Leeds that week.

Thus far I can say, 'The Lord is my Helper.' Oh may I never grieve His Spirit! Then will He be 'my Guide unto death, and my Portion for ever.'

This is a plain narrative of the dealings of God and man with me, from my youth to the forty-second year of my natural life.

JOHN NELSON.

IT does not appear that any journal was kept by Mr. Nelson after this time. In 1747 he was present at the Conference in London, which consisted of only nine preachers.

In a letter to Charles Wesley, dated March 17, 1758, he says he has just been quite through the Manchester round, and tells him that the stewards in London had told him they could not send him anything more for the support of his family. He had only about a shilling a week to keep his family, and was going to hew stone again.

'Before any circuits were formed, he went through Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, Lancashire, and several other counties in England; travelling on foot, labouring with his own hands, with no other prospect than to make known the way of life to thousands that were dead in trespasses and sins, that the captives of Satan, and the slaves of sin, might enjoy the liberty of the sons of God.'

From 1750 to his death he was stationed in London, Bristol, Birstall, Leeds, Derbyshire, Yarm, and York; and once he visited Ireland.

In 1750 he wrote to Mr. Wesley:

DEAR FATHER IN THE LORD,

MY most earnest prayers (with my best love) for you and your brother are that God may prosper His work in your hands more and more, and make your souls as a watered garden. His right hand hath done great things in these parts, both in converting and finishing the work of faith with power. We have had three that died in triumph, since I gave your brother the last account. The first was of Baildon society, who had been in a justified state about three years: she was very exact in observing all meetings as long as she was able. Her disorder was a consumption; in the beginning of which she had many conflicts and temptations; but for about ten weeks before she died, she was a monument of wonder to all that beheld her, for she did nothing but praise God and tell what He had done for her soul, and exhorted all she saw to seek the Lord while He may be found, and went praising Him out of this howling wilderness. The next was one of Halifax: several of our people were with her when she died who had attended her in her illness, and said she was as great a witness for God as ever they saw in that place. She had enjoyed a sense of pardon about two years. The next was Mr. Farray, who died the 17th inst., in the seventy-third year of his age. He was a man of unstained character, and looked upon, by priest and people, to be the best Christian in that parish before he heard us. The minister of the chapel-of-ease often slept at his

house, and strove to prejudice him and his family against the Methodists; and this he had done so effectually that when Mr. Ellison was buried he would not come to his funeral because I was to preach, though he was his brother-in-law. But it pleased God to strike with convictions all of his family that were at the funeral; and afterwards his wife. His two sons and his daughter prevailed upon him to hear for himself, as they had done. The first time he came, I was preaching from blind Bartimeus. When I had done, he cried, and said, 'I have been blind for threescore and ten years, and knew not but I was right till this day.' From that time he and all his house attended the word at all opportunities. As Mr. Merrick was preaching, he received a sense of God's love, and ever since had been steadfast, full of good works, ready to confess his blindness by nature, and the riches of God's love to him and to his house, in what company soever he came. He had three weeks' illness, which ended in his death, during which time I often visited him, to the satisfaction of my own soul; for he was praising God in the midst of racking pain. At one of my visits, two of his brothers came to see him; and he declared to them he had lived to the age of man before he knew for what end he was born, and why Christ was sent into the world. Then he broke out in tears of joy, and said, 'What could God have done more for me and my family than He hath done? for He hath not left an hoof of us in Egyptian darkness. We are all His witnesses that He is a

forgiving God. O my brothers, seek that you may find Him to be so to you!' He desired me to preach over him when he was dead; and said it might be a means to stir up some soul to seek salvation. This I did to a great multitude, from 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.' It seemed to be a glorious season. Oh may we all praise God in behalf of His glorious witnesses, and tread in their steps, that our last end may be like theirs!

The stewards and trustees of the chapel we are building, and which is now slated, desire you to give them advice how the writings must be made, which are to convey the power into the hands of seven men, to be as trustees, and for what use the house and ground are to be employed; and, as it is intended for pious use, whether it must not be enrolled in Chancery. They desire you to send a copy of the deeds of some of the houses you have been concerned in, as soon as possible; for all is in the hands of one man, and if he should die, it would cause great confusion before things could be properly settled. We all desire an interest in your prayers, and your advice in this particular. God hath opened the hearts of the people beyond expectation; and we trust He will send help from some quarter, that we may finish what we have begun in His name. I am employed in hewing stone in the day-time, and at night calling sinners to the blood of Jesus. My wife joins in love with me to you and your brother, and all the church of God in that place.

We think you are long in coming to see us. May God hasten you hither!

I am

Your unworthy son in the gospel,

JOHN NELSON.

BIRSTALL, YORKSHIRE, *Aug.* 29, 1750.

In 1771 a particular circumstance occurred which does honour to the rules of Methodism. A woman whom Mr. Nelson had dismissed from the society about twelve months before for misbehaviour stood charged at the York Assizes with a capital crime. Mr. Nelson, being at that time in the York Circuit, was subpœnaed to appear at the Crown bar, to assign his reasons for having put this woman out of the Methodist society. Mr. Nelson read the rules of the society in court; and at the end of that rule which forbids contracting a debt without any probable way of paying it, he stopped, and said, 'My lord, this was my reason for dismissing this woman from the society to which I belong.' The judge rose, and said, 'Good morality, Mr. Nelson'; and then, being seated again, desired him to read the rest of the rules. After hearing them, his lordship said emphatically to the court, 'Gentlemen, this is true Christianity.'

Wesley printed the following brief pieces written by Nelson in the *Arminian Magazine* for 1786:

MY grand-daughter, about sixteen years of age, rejoiced in the Lord about six weeks before she died. Her last words to her father and mother

were, 'Fret not; for I am going to Jesus, and to help the angels to praise God.' (See p. 193).

SARAH SCHOOLS had been a steady follower of the Lord about twenty years. I visited her several times in her illness, and always found comfort to my own soul.

The morning she died, she said to her son, 'I have had a glorious night, and now I am ready to go to my dear Redeemer. In the fore part of the night, there was a cloud between Him and my soul; but I cried, "Lord, hide not Thy face from me!" and immediately the cloud dispersed, and the glory of God shone bright on my soul.'

When Miss B. had prayed with her, she said, 'Hold on in the way thou art in, and we shall meet again in glory.' Having said this, she fell asleep in the arms of Jesus.

S. H. [of Hanging-Heaton] falling into a kind of trance, when she came to herself she told her husband she had been both in heaven and hell. When she was in the latter, she said, she saw several there whom she had known on earth. As she came out, she said, she saw one she knew (whom she then named) tumbling in, head and heels together. As soon as she came to herself, she sent her husband to see whether he was dead or not. When he inquired of the family, they had no thought of his death, seeing he was quite well when he went to bed. But, on going to see, they found him dead, with his head and heels together, as she had seen him before.

On this, she gave some account of what she had

seen in heaven. Among others, she saw Paul Greenwood, who shone like a sunbeam, together with many more whom she knew on earth. Moreover, she saw the place she was to go to. She then told them when she was to die, and accordingly died exactly at that time.

When these things were noised abroad, many hearts were filled with fear; and perhaps a few more stirred up to seek the Lord with great earnestness.

N.B. This woman had known the Lord, and adorned the gospel, twelve years.

MRS. CROWDER had adorned the gospel about six years, and was a great pattern both of charity and piety. She laboured under a lingering illness, and was worn almost to a skeleton. The last time I visited her she seemed like a bride adorned for the bridegroom. I found the Lord was very present with her. The last words she spoke were, 'All is well! for I have neither doubt nor fear.' Then, with a smiling countenance, she fell asleep in the arms of Jesus, while many cried out, 'Oh let me die her death!'

J. B. [of Kirkheaton] was awakened about thirty-one years ago, and soon received a sense of the love of God; but, marrying, the cares of the world so beset him that he walked in heaviness some time. When Mr. Wesley came first to Birstall, the Lord again revealed Himself to him, and in such a manner that he never lost His presence after for a single week. From that time, he adorned the gospel in the whole of his

behaviour; though for ten years he laboured under a very sore disorder. In the midst of his suffering he mightily praised God, and exhorted the class, which he met for twenty-eight years, to keep in the way they were then in. He said, 'God will give you strength for your day, as He hath enabled me to fight the good fight of faith. Through Him I am more than conqueror; and there is a crown of glory prepared for me. I have no doubt or fear; for perfect love casteth out fear. Tell John Nelson to preach over my corpse.' So saying, he resigned his soul to Jesus, and left a good savour behind him.[1]

S. CHASTER [of Daw-Green] had for ten years so adorned the gospel that it became a proverb in Dewsbury 'that few could live like S. Chaster.' I visited her in her illness, and found great satisfaction. She said she had never lost her first love. When the Lord called her, she was full of good works, and seemed like a shock of wheat fully ripe.

H. BOOTH [of Cleckheaton] was converted one-and-thirty years ago, and retained a sense of the goodness of God a great part of that time, though she had many trials in her family. The first two years her husband strove to provoke her; but, coming to hear Mr. Charles Wesley, he was convinced that she was right and he was wrong. He then sought the Lord, and found Him. Since

[1] In a letter to Charles Wesley, Nelson says: 'But few children cry so tenderly for a father as the people of that society did for the loss of him when I went to preach his funeral.'

then he has been a class-leader twenty-seven years; all which time he has also had the gospel preached in his house. His wife was quite happy in her last illness, and finished her course with joy. Thus is the Lord giving both living and dying witnesses of His grace, that the saints may be encouraged to go on, and that sinners may be without excuse.

JOHN NELSON.

Dec. 24, 1772.

Several letters of Nelson's, preserved at the Methodist Book Room, are quoted in Mr. Laycock's *Methodist Heroes in the Great Haworth Round*. Charles Wesley tells Nelson in 1760, 'John, I love thee from my heart.' Nelson's feeling is well expressed in this beautiful letter:

HUDDERSFIELD, *Dec.* 5, 1772.

To the Rev. Charles Wesley.

DEAR SIR,

This with my duty to you and earnest prayer for you and yours. I do not know that one day passes without you being brought to my mind. But you have reason to think otherwise, for I find the letter I sent by a private hand was not delivered to you. But my soul is united to yours as much as ever, and there are no letters so cheering to my soul as yours. But I have had many trials since I saw you, for my wife hath not had one week's health for above four years, so that she is almost like a skeleton, and cannot help herself. But she is happy in her soul in the midst

of pain and weakness; and my grand-daughter[1] that looked to her is dead of a consumption, and she laid nine months badly, but died praising the Lord. But I was obliged to keep one to wait on them, and to sell my young horse to pay them and the doctor, and I bless God that I was able to pay as far as I did.

I find my soul in peace, and the Lord doth yet convert sinners by His word, and many have died in triumph of faith lately. Our brother John Beamont, of Kirkhutton, finished his course about six weeks since, after ten years' affliction, in full triumph. . . . Mrs. Crowder died near the same time; she had been a pattern to all about her in patience and good works, and she lived above a year under the afflicting hand of God, and praised Him with her last breath; and a man that had persecuted his wife for more than thirty years we have reason to believe is escaped and gone to Christ through the prayers of his wife to God, heard for him. O sir, I long to see you and all my friends there, and I desire you and all to pray for me and mine. From your son to serve,

JOHN NELSON.

Such a letter shows that the passion for souls burned as brightly to the end of his days as it did even in John and Charles Wesley.

In 1773 Nelson was stationed in the Leeds Circuit; and, after seeing the work of God spread through the county of York, where God made him

[1] See p. 189.

the honoured instrument of beginning the revival, he ended his labours and his life in peace.

His death is thus described :

LEEDS, *July* 22, 1774.

LAST Monday, about three o'clock, Mr. John Nelson, coming in from dining with Mr. Jowat,[1] went up into his room, and said to S. B., 'I do not know that I have been so well after dinner this long time.' In a little while, being seized with a violent purging and vomiting, he was helped to bed. He had not been there long before he became insensible; and at half-past four o'clock in the afternoon [July 18] he died. On Wednesday his remains were carried through the streets of Leeds, in their way to Birstall, attended by thousands, who were either singing or weeping. It was truly a very solemn season to many to see him carried to his grave who had done and suffered so much in these parts for the honour of God and the good of men. But as he died in the Lord, he now rests from his labours, and his works follow him. Oh how ought we to be humbled, on seeing the first instruments of the great revival of religion in our day called away so fast! Lord, in mercy to the rising generation, continue a constant succession of holy and useful men, who shall not count their lives dear unto themselves when they may be spent for Thy sake!

Mrs. Fletcher writes, 'November 28, 1807':

'He was an extraordinary man for tenderness of conscience, watchfulness over his words, and

[1] Mr. Jowat died at Camberwell, April, 1801 (Atmore's *Memorial*, p. 297).

especially for self-denial and rigid temperance. He made it a rule to rise out of bed about twelve o'clock, and sit up till two, for prayer and converse with God: then he slept till four; at which time he always rose. Many of his friends at Leeds observed him to be more lively, both in preaching and conversation, a few days before his death, than ever. The last day of his valuable life he dined with a friend in Leeds, and felt a return of the gout in his stomach. When he came home to the preaching-house, where he resided, he was seized with a loss of sight, and violent retching, which ended in apoplexy, and removed him to glory.'

Thomas Jackson says:

Mr. Nelson, as a man, was lively, active, and strong, of great resolution and undaunted courage. In his natural state, he restrained not his corrupt desires; and through the force of example was precipitated into the barbarous follies of the day, such as hunting, cock-fighting, bull-baiting, &c.; yet, in all his transactions with men, he preserved the utmost punctuality.

As a Christian, his experience was clear and scriptural. Previously, however, to his conversion, he was restless and unhappy for some years: this increased into a deep conviction of sin. The Lord, by a chain of providences, brought him under the preaching of the gospel, in Moorfields, London. He then saw that the way of salvation by Jesus was the only way to peace and rest. He was soon after enabled to believe to the saving of his soul. Great was the deliverance, and unspeakable the

joy, when 'Christ was formed in him the hope of glory.' From that time he became a zealous defender of the salvation he experienced. Jesus, the only name given whereby we can be saved, was ever dear to him; and his life appeared to be one continued act of faith. When called to preach the gospel, he conferred not with flesh and blood. He knew, from experience, the depth of human depravity; and however innumerable the sins are which spring from this corrupt fountain, he also knew they must all fall before the gospel, when received by faith. As he had sought salvation by works himself, he knew well how to distinguish between the form and the power of godliness; and to promote the latter, he laid the axe to the root of the tree. 'Ye must be born again,' was a common topic with him. As he knew the inseparable connexion between believing in Christ, and bringing forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness, so he was as careful to insist upon the latter as to preach the former: and his own life showed the excellence of raising the superstructure of holiness, as well as relying with implicit confidence on the 'precious cornerstone laid in Zion.' In short, though his language was plain, it was mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. The trumpet from his mouth did not give an uncertain sound. His natural understanding being strong, and aided by the influence of the Holy Spirit, he had the testimony of men of parts and learning that he was 'a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.' From his

views and experience of gospel doctrines, he could, on the one hand, point the penitent to 'the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world'; while, on the other, he could, with pure, disinterested affection, declare to the believer that 'the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin'; knowing that 'He saveth to the uttermost all those that come unto God by Him.' And though God gave him many living and dying witnesses, as seals to his ministry, he was convinced, in the midst of his success, that it was 'not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord.'

His tombstone in Birstall churchyard bears the following inscription:

'JOHN NELSON
DEPARTED THIS LIFE, JULY YE 18,
1774, AGED 67 YEARS.
MARTHA, HIS WIFE, DEPARTED THIS
LIFE, SEP. YE 11, 1774, AGED 69 YEARS.'

While we on earth had our abode,
We both agreed to serve the Lord;
And He was pleas'd, as you may see,
By death not long us parted be.
Then He required the breath He gave,
And now we lie, both in one grave;
Until again He us restore
A life to live, and die no more.

THOMAS LEE[1]

I WAS born in May, in the year 1727, at a small village in the parish of Keighley, Yorkshire. When I was four years old my mother died, and I was removed to her brother's, at Long Addingham. Here I was carefully restrained from outward sin; yet I often felt an inclination to it; particularly to swear; which one day I did: but, blessed be God, He struck me with so deep a conviction that I never swore again from that day, nor had the least inclination to it. About fourteen, I was bound apprentice to one of the worsted trade, and was by a kind Providence placed in a family where I wanted nothing that was needful either for body or soul.

From my early days the Lord was at times powerfully working upon my soul. From ten or eleven years of age, I was exceedingly distressed. I generally saw, as I thought, hell before me, and believed it was to be my portion. The words 'everlasting' and 'eternity' were much upon my mind, insomuch that my life became a burden to me. For, on the one hand, hell appeared intolerable; and, on the other, I found no delight in the service of God; so that my days were consumed in trouble. Frequently

[1] From the *Arminian Magazine*, 1780.

did I murmur against God, and often wished to be annihilated.

In this state I continued till I was fourteen, though with some intervals. I was then a little more at ease, and followed what are called 'recreations.' But from fifteen I was more inclined to reading, and for some time spent all my vacant hours in reading Scripture; and took much pleasure therein. Between sixteen and seventeen I found much delight in prayer, and had many inward consolations, though I had never then heard any one speak of the comforts of the Holy Ghost. But, having none to speak to about these things, they gradually died away. From seventeen to nineteen was the most careless part of my life. I now sought pleasure in mirth and company. But the Lord generally disappointed me, and made it bitter to my soul. I could not find any companions to my mind. I sought mirth; but I thought they carried it to excess. And I could not bear their taking the name of God in vain. Hence I had much sorrow at times, likewise the looking back, and seeing what seriousness I had fallen from, cut me to the heart.

During this time I now and then heard that blessed man, Mr. Grimshaw, and made good resolutions; but they lasted not long. Meanwhile I had heard of a people called Methodists; but I was little concerned about them, till I heard some of them preach. I liked them well, and heard them more and more frequently. And though I was not deeply affected under any particular sermon, yet my conscience was

gradually enlightened, by hearing, and reading, and conversing, and praying, till I resolved to cast in my lot among them. From that time my heart was so united to them, that all at once I dropped all my former companions. And, blessed be God, from that hour I have never had one desire to turn back.

I now loved the Bible more than ever, particularly the New Testament. This was my daily companion; and in reading and meditating upon it I found great delight. And hereby I was delivered from a temptation to think, 'These are the false prophets we are bidden to beware of.' This vanished away when I compared their doctrines and practice with my Bible. And my judgement was more fully and clearly informed of all the essential doctrines of Christianity. And in the use of these means God frequently met me, and comforted my soul. Indeed, the doctrine of salvation by grace was unspeakably comfortable to me. Yet, shortly after, I sunk almost all at once into a desponding state, which continued more than a year. And though during this time I was often comforted, both under the word and in prayer, yet I do not remember passing four-and-twenty hours together without being some part of the time in despair.

In this period I was continually tempted to think myself a hypocrite. Once I mentioned this to a friend, but got no comfort at all, which shut my mouth for a long time. It is impossible to express the anguish I felt. I longed for death, though I knew I was not fit for it. But in the

midst of all, I constantly heard the preaching at all opportunities, and never omitted prayer. When I could say nothing, I groaned before God; resolving if I perished (as I expected to do), it should be in the means of grace.

Yet even in this period the Lord did not leave me. As I was one night on my knees groaning before Him, those words were powerfully applied to my soul, 'Thou shalt bear My name before much people.' And this impression never after left my mind long together, which often constrained me to hope that the Lord would some time help me. Also, during all this time, I had favour with my master and mistress and all the family; although they did not much like the people to whom I belonged. Toward the end of this gloomy season, one evening, when sitting in the house, I took courage, rose up, and desired we might have family prayer. I kneeled down, and so did all the family, and prayed with great freedom. And I continued it, though only an apprentice; which proved a great blessing to my own soul. For it kept me watchful all the day long, lest my prayer and my life should contradict each other.

Soon after I was desired to pray in another family, which I did several times. I had now more hope; and one day, being alone great part of the day, and much engaged in meditation and prayer, I found a persuasion that God was willing to receive me. I left my business immediately, and went to prayer. In a moment God broke in upon my soul in so wonderful a manner,

that I could no longer doubt of His forgiving love. I cried, 'My Lord and my God!' And in the spirit I was then in, I could have praised, and loved, and waited to all eternity.

Before this I had attended several meetings for prayer. I was now, unawares, brought to conduct those meetings, and sometimes to speak a few words in His name whom I loved. When the meetings were over, others asked me to come to their houses, which I promised to do. But when I came home, I feared I had gone too far, and resolved to make no more such promises. One night as I was going to a neighbour's house, one of my master's daughters, who was going with me, said, 'My father and mother are not pleased with your proceedings.' I asked, 'Why, what have I done?' She said, 'They would not have you go to such houses. But if you think it is your duty to keep meetings in the neighbourhood, they would have you keep them at home.'

That night my soul was greatly comforted, and I gave notice of speaking at home on Sunday evening. We had abundance of people, and neither my master nor mistress seemed to be at all displeased. They loved me dearly, and let me go wherever I would. But in the midst of all these outward blessings, I had many inward trials. Sometimes I doubted of my state; sometimes I feared I had run before I was sent; and many times said, with Jeremiah, 'I will speak no more in this name.' And thus I continued for several months, though many were

blessed and comforted in hearing me. Frequently I consulted my dear friend Mr. Grimshaw, who strongly exhorted me not to be faint or weary, but to go on valiantly in the work to which God had called me.

About this time [1748] I was invited to go to Harden Moor, Lingbob near Wilsden, and Thornton above Bradford. As these were places where no one had preached yet, I thought if God would own me here, and raise up a people for Himself, I shall know that He hath sent me. He did so; many found peace with God, and a society was raised at each place. After delivering these up to the travelling preachers, I went to Long Addingham. There also God was pleased to set to His seal. A society was quickly raised. Many sinners were convinced, and several of them truly converted to God.

During all this time I wrought exceedingly hard at my own business when I was at home; but the going up and down to preach frequently took up more than half my time. After a while, Providence called me to Greenow Hill, to Hartwith, and some other places; at each of which it pleased God to raise up a people for Himself. After I had preached some time at Greenow Hill, I was invited to Pateley Bridge. Here I was called to an exercise of my faith which I had not hitherto known. The first time I was there, Mr. —— had prepared and encouraged a numerous mob, who spared neither mud nor stones, with many strokes besides, so that they themselves owned, 'We have done enough to make an end

of him.' I did, indeed, reel to and fro, and my head was broken with a stone. But I never found my soul more happy, nor was ever more composed in my closet. It was a glorious time; and there are several who date their conversion from that day. After I was a little cleaned, I went to a neighbouring town, where, when my head was dressed, I preached abroad to abundance of people, many of whom had followed me from Pateley Bridge. Some of the mob also followed: but, as the wretched minister was not present to head them, and as they were greatly out-numbered, they behaved peaceably; and the Lord blessed us much.

Having now laboured near four years, and travelled generally on foot, having been often thoroughly wet, and obliged to keep on my wet clothes all day, and having frequently, when at home, worked at night, that I might not be burdensome to any, I found I was not so strong as formerly. And the number of places still increasing, I was obliged, though much against my will, to give up business, and buy a horse. Mr. Grimshaw now sent me into his circuit [1] for a month, sending another preacher in my place. Then I returned, and spent a considerable time together among the new societies.

In the year 1752, and during the winter following, the work of God prospered exceedingly; but persecution raged on every side. The malice of the devil was chiefly levelled against me, as

[1] Grimshaw, the vicar of Haworth, acted as Wesley's Assistant of the Haworth Circuit (Myles' *Life of Grimshaw*, p. 18).

I was the first that disturbed his servants in these parts. So that wherever I went, I was in much danger, carrying as it were my life in my hand. One day, as I was going through Pateley, the captain of the mob, who was kept in constant pay, pursued me, and pulled me off my horse. The mob then soon collected about me; and one or other struck up my heels (I believe, more than twenty times) upon the stones. They then dragged me into a house by the hair of the head; then pushed me back, with one or two upon me, and threw me with the small of my back upon the edge of the stone stairs. This nearly broke my back; and it was not well for many years after. Thence they dragged me down to the common sewer, which carries the dirt from the town to the river. They rolled me in it for some time; then dragged me to the bridge, and threw me into the water. They had me mostly on the ground, my strength being quite spent.

My wife, with some friends, now came up. Seeing her busy about me, some asked, 'What, are you a Methodist?' gave her several blows, which made her bleed at the mouth, and swore they would put her into the river. All this time I lay upon the ground, the mob being undetermined what to do. Some cried out, 'Make an end of him.' Others were for sparing my life; but the dispute was cut short by their agreeing to put some others into the water. So they took them away, leaving me and my wife together. She endeavoured to raise me up; but, having no strength, I dropped to the ground again. She

got me up again, and supported me about an hundred yards; then I was set on horseback, and made a shift to ride softly, as far as Michael Granger's house. Here I was stripped from head to foot, and was washed. I left my wet clothes here, and rode to Greenow Hill, where many were waiting for me; and, though much bruised and very weak, preached a short sermon, from Ps. xxxiv. 19: 'Many are the troubles of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.'

The next morning I preached again. Afterwards several accompanied me a by-way to North Pasture. There were many serious hearers; but the captain of the mob came, and made some disturbance, and then with a great stick broke every pane of glass in a large window. This made a little confusion at first; but afterwards the Lord poured down His blessing in an uncommon manner. Almost all were in tears, and the people took joyfully the spoiling of their goods. Thence we rode to Hartwith, where we had peace, and the power of the Lord was with us. But when the work of the day was over, I was so bruised and sore that I was obliged to be undressed by another.

This summer, autumn, and winter were times of hot persecution. Our friends frequently suffered when they went upon business to Pateley Bridge. Their clothes were spoiled, and their persons much abused. They applied for justice to the Dean of Ripon, but found none. But what made amends was, we loved each other dearly, and

had exceedingly comfortable seasons together. In January I was invited to preach about a mile from Pateley. When I came, the mob was gathered.

However, in the name of the Lord I began; and though they blasphemed horribly, and broke the windows, I was not interrupted or discomposed, but prayed, preached, and concluded in peace. As soon as I had ended, they became outrageous. I retired into a chamber, and gave myself to prayer. While I was on my knees, one came and informed me the mob had forced into the house, and would quickly be in the chamber; but that I must get out at the window, and there were some friends below, who would catch me as I fell.

In a while, being desired to preach there again, I fixed it in the day-time, thinking the mob would not leave their work to disturb us. But they soon came, and surrounded the house, so that I could not preach at all. After I had been kept prisoner for several hours, I was obliged to run for my life. About the same time I was invited to Garthit Hall, where I preached in the open air with little interruption; but when I went again, the Pateley mob came, though the floods were out. When I began to preach, they were more and more violent, till I was forced to desist and retire. Being resolved I should not escape again, they surrounded the house till near sunset. Then they ran to beat one of the people. Our friends snatched the opportunity and brought me a horse, which I immediately

mounted. The mob seeing this left him, and pursued me. But again God delivered me out of their hands.

But hearing I was to preach some miles off, on the other side of the water, they immediately divided (it being a great flood) to the different bridges. This obliged us to ride many miles about. It being very dark, we lost our way upon the moors.

We wandered till we were thoroughly wet with snow and rain; but late at night found our way to Thomas Lupton's. The congregation had waited for several hours, being in much trouble for fear I was killed. I changed my clothes, and, though it was late, preached to them as the Lord enabled me. It seemed to us little less than heaven; and though it was a hard day, it was a blessed day to my soul.

I remember once, during these seasons of trouble, wherein my life continually hung in suspense, a thought came into my mind, 'It is hard to have no respite, to be thus perpetually suffering.' Immediately it was impressed upon my mind, 'Did you not, when you was on the borders of despair, promise the Lord that if He would give you an assurance of His favour, you would count no suffering, sorrow, or affliction too great to be endured for His name's sake?' This at once silenced all murmuring; and thenceforth I bore whatever befell me with patience, and after with joy, finding a willingness to bear it as long as He saw meet, if it were to the end of my life.

[' 1755, *March* 12.[1]—I have this day set down some of the Lord's dealings with my soul: for of three months my way to the kingdom hath been through manifold tribulation, so that indeed I have had such trials as I never expected from those they have come from; which has made me ready to say with David, " If it had been an enemy that had done it, I could have borne it; but it was thou my familiar friend, in whom I trusted,"—so that through reason[2] and other things it is with great difficulty that I continue to preach, sometimes thinking I shall give over, being so overcome by reasoning, so that I scarce know whom to trust, finding so much deceit in so many professors. At other times I find my evidence brighter for heaven, and my soul more drawn with love to souls; and then I think I shall go on preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. But at the present my trials are such that I scarce know how it will be; only this word at times seems to pierce my heart, " A dispensation being committed to me, woe is me if I preach not the gospel,"—which times, with other inward movings, make me say to God, " Lord, if Thou wilt, keep me from all sin that I may never give offence to or hurt Thy cause, and that Thou wouldst fill my heart with Thy power and love, and bless the word to the souls of the people, that good may be done by me; then, Lord, I

[1] The following extracts (marked by square brackets) are from Lee's diary, which is still preserved.

[2] Thomas Lee uses the words 'reason' and 'reasoning' in the sense of perturbation of mind.

would go from cross to cross, from trial to trial, if it be but for Christ's sake."'

Thursday, 13.—Was in great reasoning this day about giving over preaching as a travelling preacher; came to Calverley this noon, where the Lord enabled me to speak His word; came this evening to Windhill, had some freedom in speaking, and I believe God was with us. Blessed be God, another day is over!

Friday, 14.—I still had the cross to carry; but, blessed be God, He gave me strength to bear it, and freedom in speaking the word to the people at Idle, where I was at noon. Came to Yeadon at night; the Lord enabled me to preach, and His Spirit so applied it as made it truly profitable to the people.

Saturday, 15.—Had this morning, in some measure, an awful sense of God upon my soul; went and visited some of my friends, conversed of the things of God. In the evening stood up between the living and the dead, and, as God enabled me, declared to them the counsel of God, and I hope the divine presence was with us. Lord, take Thou all the glory!

Sunday, 16.—Almost as soon as I awoke, I found the enemy very busy, but through mercy I was upholden above my trouble. Preached this morning at Farsley, where there was a great outpouring of the Spirit of God, which some will have reason to remember in time and in eternity; glory be to God for the same! At noon I preached to a large and well-behaved congregation at Whitcoothill [i.e. Westgate Hill]; had great

freedom in speaking, and the Lord lifted my head above my sorrow; and I believe God searched the hearts of the people by the word, so that the seed sown this day was, I trust, so watered by the divine blessing that it will be found at the last day. In the evening I preached at Bramley, and though my body was so weak, yet God enabled me to speak to their ears, and His Spirit to the hearts of the people.]

About this time, I had thirteen or fourteen places where I preached regularly. And I thought only of spending my life among them, when Mr. Grimshaw mentioned me to you.[1] You sent for me, and asked whether I was willing to be a travelling preacher. I said 'Yes, if Mr. Grimshaw would supply my places'; which he promised to do. That year I was most in the Birstall and Leeds Circuits: the next in the Leeds Circuit altogether, which then comprehended Sheffield, and York also; extending into Derbyshire on the south, to Hull on the east, and on the north as far as Newton, under Rosebury Topping.[2]

In the year 1758 I was stationed in Lincolnshire. The whole county, now divided into three, was then only in one circuit. So I spent two months in the eastern part, and then two months

[1] Wesley.

[2] On July 21, 1757, Grimshaw wrote him an encouraging letter, in which he says, 'Tommy, let us preach four times a day, or thirty times a week, whether you please, or can bear better. It will be all little enough. Our Master well deserves it; yea, and infinitely more.'

in the western. I was in this circuit about sixteen months in all. And I did not labour in vain. There was a very considerable increase in the societies, and many souls were brought to the saving knowledge of God. And though the rides were long, and the work was hard, yet all was made easy and comfortable. The Lord was greatly with us, and the people in general were loving and teachable; and I know not if I shall ever love a people better on this side eternity.

Thence I removed into the Newcastle Circuit, which then included Edinburgh: to which we went, and back again in a fortnight, generally preaching night and morning. I found many trials in this circuit, but the Lord delivered me out of all. The next year I was in the Manchester round, which then contained Lancashire, Cheshire, part of Shropshire and of Wales, Staffordshire, and part of Derbyshire. Our labour was hard; but we saw much fruit of it, particularly at Manchester and Bolton. In the latter part of the year I was generally supposed to be far gone in a consumption. I was not careful about it, not doubting but if the Lord called me, I should finish my course with joy. But it pleased God to restore my health and strength. May I still glorify Him with my body and my spirit!

After some years I went, accompanied with my wife, to Edinburgh. Mr. Hopper laboured with me. It was now Dr. Erskine published and recommended the eleven Letters ascribed to

Mr. Hervey.[1] This occasioned a good deal of reproach for a time; after which I was called away to Newcastle. The weather was very severe. Day after day we had various storms, and were hardly able to preserve life. But the worst was when we came to the steep descent from the mountains, called the Pease, where the hill had fallen into the deep road, and made it utterly impassable. This obliged us to creep along a path like a sheep-track, hanging over a deep vale. Meantime the snow and wind beat so furiously upon us that we knew not if we should escape with life. After lodging at Old Camus (a most uncomfortable inn), we went forward through sharp frost, heavy snow beating upon us, and miserable roads to Alnwick. From thence to Morpeth we had fair weather; but the next day was heavy rain, which attended us all the way to Newcastle. And here I remained, fully employed till the Manchester Conference.

In 1760 I was stationed at Epworth once more. This winter we were invited to Newark-upon-Trent. But we met with much opposition from riotous mobs, encouraged by great men. On the 24th of March they took the pulpit out of the preaching-house, and burned it in the market-place. I went thither on the 7th of April, with Mr. and Mrs. Pool, of North Scarle. The preaching was to begin at two o'clock; but a

[1] 'Eleven Letters from the late Rev. Mr. Hervey to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, containing an answer to that Gentleman's Remarks on *Theron and Aspasio*.' See references in Hanby's and Taylor's Lives; also Rev. D. Butler's *Wesley and Whitefield in Scotland*, pp. 147-154.

large mob was there before I began. I prayed, and preached a short sermon. Toward the latter end of the discourse they threw a large quantity of eggs filled with blood, and sealed with pitch, which made strange work wherever they alighted. When they had discharged these, they grew more outrageous still. We judged it best to send to the mayor. But, instead of coming to quell the riot, he sent an order for me to appear before him. In our way to the main street, there was a deep, muddy drain. They attempted to push me into it. But I catched hold of one of the mob, and held him so fast, that they could not push in one without the other. When we came to the mayor's, he sent for the town-clerk. I showed them the Act of Toleration, and the certificate of my licence, observing I had done nothing which was not warranted by law. After much conversation, our friends gave evidence against three of the rioters, who were bound over to the assizes.

Some thousands of the mob being gathered in the street, I requested the mayor to send an officer to guard me through them. He said he would go himself. And he did go to the gate; but when I was gone out, immediately went back. I was presently surrounded; and they soon began to throw mire, clods of earth, and stones in abundance. This they continued to do, all down the street, till we came to the preaching-house. Our friends, judging there would be no safety there, brought my great-coat into the stable, and advised me to mount and gallop through the mob, which

I purposed to do. Accordingly, I mounted; but some of them held the gate, and others beat both me and my mare in so violent a manner that I thought it would be best to dismount and go the back way. But here also the mob met me, beat both me and the mare, and when I endeavoured to mount, pulled me back, and the mare got from me. Then they dragged me along, sometimes on my feet, and sometimes on the ground, to the side of the Trent, swearing they would throw me in. But they were not agreed to this; so they brought water, and poured it upon me from head to foot. A painter then came with his pot and brush, and laid it on plentifully. They still surrounded me, throwing dirt, and beating me till I could hardly stir. Then they offered to let me go, if I would promise never to come again. But this I could not do. Just then a man came cursing, swearing, and threatening, offended, it seemed, at their proceedings; at which most of them left me, and dispersed.

I rose up, and walked as well as I could down the Marsh, a few of the mob quietly walking with me. I found my mare in a standing water; I went in, took her, and rode off. Coming to a pond, I alighted, washed myself a little, and then went on to North Scarle; but it was hard work, as the night came on, and I was very wet, and exceedingly cold. When I got there I procured some dry clothes, and the Lord gave me a quiet night. The next day I was very sore and weak; however, I sat up most of the day, and in a little

time I recovered my strength, and had still more cause to trust and praise God.

On July 16 was our trial at Nottingham. But the grand jury, sparing the rioters all they could, would not find the bill for disturbing me at public worship, but only for assaulting me. They were accordingly bound over, to be tried for the assault at the next assizes. Meantime an innumerable mob was collected both within and without the court, threatening what they would do to me. I therefore addressed the recorder for a guard. He immediately ordered two constables to conduct me safe to my lodging. The mob roared; but durst go no farther. So I returned home unmolested. At the following assizes several of the rioters were indicted: judge's warrants were issued out and executed. In October my counsel and the recorder agreed (to prevent all farther trouble) what each offender should pay, after making submission, and promising to offend no more. The recorder then gave them a very pertinent exhortation, and, hearing the Nottingham mob was collected again, sent two constables to guard me to my lodgings, and ordered them to give the people notice that if any man offered to assault me, he would immediately send him to prison. Thus ended the troublesome affair at Newark. Since then the work of God has prospered greatly. And a convenient preaching-house has been built, in which numerous congregations meet without any disturbance.

Thus have I given you a few imperfect hints of the manner wherein our Lord has dealt with

me. My whole life, particularly since I have known something of the saving power of religion, has been attended all along with manifold trials, a thousand times more than I have related; yet has the Lord been exceedingly gracious to me, the most unworthy of all His people. If I this moment saw all the sufferings I have had for His name's sake; if they were now spread before me, I would say, 'Lord, if Thou wilt give me strength, I will now begin again, and Thou shalt add to them lions' dens, and fiery furnaces, and by Thy grace I will go through them all.' My life, though attended with many crosses, has been a life of mercies.

For more than twenty years I have rarely preached upon the controversy between the Calvinists and Arminians. But my judgement is fixed: I have no doubt, either of Christ's tasting death for every man, or of His being able and willing to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through Him. I count it one of the greatest favours that He still allows me to do a little for Him, and that He in any measure owns the little which I am able to speak in His name. I beg that I may be humble at His feet all the days of my life, and may be more and more like Him whom my soul loveth, till at last I reign with Him in glory!

I am, dear sir,
Your willing, though unworthy servant in the gospel,
THOMAS LEE.

October 30, 1779.

Mrs. Lee wrote to Mr. Wesley after her husband's death:

'REV. SIR,

'MY dear husband's last illness began with a pain in his foot, which soon went up into his leg. When he mentioned it, we thought it was the rheumatism, and applied many things to warm it. By these means it seemingly got better. After some time it ascended into his thigh, and became very exquisite. On the morning before he died, the violence of the pain abated a little; but in the afternoon grew worse again, yet we had no apprehension of his death.

'The evening before he died, he expressed great resignation to the will of the Lord; though, as he said, the pains drank up his spirits. He said, "I am the Lord's; and I feel that I am united to Him; and I know I shall be with Him for ever!"

'He preached twice the Sunday before he died; although he went to the preaching-house on crutches, and sat all the time he preached. His first text that day was, "All flesh is as grass, and the glory thereof is as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth, the flower thereof fadeth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." His last text was, "Surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear the Lord," &c. In this sermon he said, "Perhaps this will be my last sermon": and truly the power of the Lord was solemnly felt by most present. And, as if he saw his end was near, he gave out a funeral hymn. When he came to those words—

By faith we already behold
That lovely Jerusalem here;
Her walls are of jasper and gold,
As crystal her buildings are clear;

he seemed to be quite transported at the thought of meeting Jesus.

'The night in which he died, I went to bed as usual. But before I slept, the pain flew up to his heart. On this I arose, and called in George Eskrick. We raised him up, and put something in his mouth, which came out again. He was so sensible as to take my handkerchief to wipe it up. We laid him down again. He sobbed several times, looked up once, and smiled; closed his eyes, and gently fell asleep.

'A few months before, he told me he had never such a view of God's love towards him as he had that morning in prayer. The following words were then made a great blessing to him: "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine." From that time I believe he never had a shadow of doubt on his mind concerning his eternal welfare.

'I am, rev. sir, yours affectionately,

'MARY LEE.

'BOLTON, *Sept.* 9, 1786.'

John Nelson, in a letter to Charles Wesley, says: 'Bro. Thos. Lee is a faithful labourer. He is a right old Methodist preacher, and the power of God attends his word.'

His Obituary is in the Minutes of Conference for the year 1787: 'Thomas Lee, a faithful brother, and a good old soldier of Jesus Christ.'

JOHN PRICKARD[1]

I was born in New Mote, in Pembrokeshire, on the 3rd of August, 1744. That village was then the freest from vice I ever saw. This circumstance I have reason to be thankful for, as I spent the greatest part of my childhood without seeing or hearing much of outward wickedness.

When I was about nine years old my father removed, with all his family, to Creswell Quay, in the same county, where he has lived ever since. There the scene was sadly changed: it being a creek of Milford Haven, where a vast quantity of coals is shipped off, the great resort of sailors and of other strangers introduced cursing, swearing, and Sabbath-breaking, with many foolish and wicked amusements.

My parents (who were religiously disposed) restrained their children as much as possible from the company of wicked children; and, by that means, through the blessing of God, we were kept from outward wickedness. Nevertheless, I sometimes took the advantage of their absence (when they have been gone to hear the word), and have played in the streets, or else gone a-pleasuring on the water, on a Sabbath-day. I

[1] *Arminian Magazine*, 1788.

was also much inclined to go to cock-fightings and other amusements, but was happily prevented.

I lived with my parents till I was about seventeen, during which time I had frequent drawings of the Spirit of God, and many severe reproaches of conscience. Very often did I hear the word with pleasure, especially from Mr. Whitefield and Mr. Howell Davies, and believed all the truth so far as I was instructed: indeed, I believed more than the truth, more than I can believe now; for I was a thorough Predestinarian, not hesitating even at reprobation! But all this time I was a stranger to God and my own heart.

In the latter end of the year 1761 I removed to Brecon, to an uncle. He at that time disliked the Methodists, thinking it sufficient to go to church twice on Sundays; which he did, and obliged all his family to do the same. But he laid no restraint on me. I might go to hear the Methodists if I chose. But as I was now got from under the tuition of my parents, and being rather ashamed of the cross, I neglected the preaching entirely. Nor was this all; for (being free from outward restraint) I fell into open sin, such as swearing, cursing, breaking the Sabbath, and sometimes (for the sake of company) I drank to excess.

At first I felt some remorse of conscience, but soon found that sin hardeneth the heart. For after awhile I became an habitual swearer, and gave my mind up to vanity. I went on thus for three years and upwards, though I had frequent checks of conscience, and always believed that

if I did not mend my ways, I must go to hell; yea, I often resolved in my own mind that I must be a Christian indeed, be born of God, or I could not be saved. I therefore fully intended to be truly religious, and to be a Methodist, when I was settled in the world. Indeed, though I never was so uncharitable as to think that none could be saved but they, yet (as I believed them to be the most scriptural in their sentiments of any I knew) I always thought it my duty to join them some time or other. Thus I held a good part of the truth in unrighteousness; yet I went so far as to dispute warmly with my cousin in its defence, and often confuted him by quotations out of the Common Prayer-Book. But, alas! I was all this time ashamed of the people I knew to be the children of God, and also an enemy to God both in heart and in life.

When I was a little turned twenty, my eldest cousin (a sober, industrious, sensible young man) died of consumption. He lingered above a year, and had constant hopes of recovery; but being at length confined to his bed, he gave up all hopes of life. About four days before he died, his father was in the room with him, and heard him burst out into a sudden bewailing of his sins. His father said, 'My dear, you have led a regular, sober life, and there can be no fear of you: if you are not safe, what will become of such a sinner as I, and thousands more?' His son replied, 'But I have been a negligent sinner,' and refused to be comforted by all his father could say. The day he died (his father being

still in the room with him) he lay quiet for a considerable time, till he heard the clock strike one. He then lifted himself up on his pillow (though he had not been able to turn in bed for many days before), and cried out, 'O, happy hour! happy hour!' and presently died. Thus God made one a dying witness of the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins, who did not believe the doctrine till a very little before his death.

This extraordinary death of so near a relation was a loud call to all the house, and to me in particular. But though it made some impression on me for a short season, it soon vanished away.

Soon after I heard an alarming sermon preached in our church upon the day of judgement. I was cut to the heart, and could get no rest all the afternoon. But I banished the impressions in the evening by going into company. Yet while I was there I had hard work to get rid of the sermon; the day of judgement still stared me in the face.

The summer following I fell into a decline, and lingered for some months. About the beginning of September, as I lay in my bed one night, all of a sudden the following thoughts struck me: 'My cousin died of this disorder last winter; and it is hardly possible that I shall live till spring. What! and must I die so soon? Then, as sure as I am now alive, I shall go to hell! Alas! I deserve nothing less; I can expect nothing less!' Then waiting for the young man who lay with me to go to sleep, I arose, and

went to prayer, and besought the Lord to restore me to health; and solemnly promised that if He did, I would immediately turn to Him, hear His word, and own His people. And (oh wonderful goodness!) He heard me, and gave me another trial; for in less than a fortnight I was better; and before winter set in, was quite recovered.

But alas! I did not keep my promise. It is true I heard the Methodists all the winter; but as I recovered, my serious impressions wore off to such a degree that when the days lengthened (so that we must go by daylight to the preaching), I was ashamed to go! I also broke off all outward sins for a time; but when I got quite out of danger, I returned to them again with greater greediness than ever; and thus I continued all that year.

Early in the following spring I went to see my parents; but all the time I was at home I behaved very undutifully, in refusing to be restrained from going to cock-fightings, &c. When they persuaded me with great tenderness, I had the audacity to tell them (though against my conscience), that they were as bigoted as Papists! But I severely smarted for this before I found the Lord.

Some time after I returned to Brecon, I was providentially led to hear Mr. C[heek][1]; and being cut to the heart, I once more sought the Lord in earnest for a short time, and then fell into sin again.

Towards the latter end of the summer, 1767,

[1] See p. 227

my surviving cousin, Mr. William Miller, said to me one Sunday morning, 'Will you go to hear Mr. Wesley, who is to preach at eight o'clock?'[1] I replied, 'I will.' Accordingly, we went, and waited till Mr. Wesley came. When he appeared, the first sight I had of him so much affected me, that I could not soon forget it. Soon after he stood up and preached from the following words: 'The wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein.' Under this sermon I was more instructed than under all that I had heard before put together. In the evening he preached on 'He healeth the broken in heart.' Both of these sermons were of such service to me that I never more gave such a loose to sin as I had done before; although soon after I fell from my former steadfastness, and lived carelessly for near a year.

The means of this fall was as follows: Wanting to send a letter to my father, and hearing that there was a young man at the inn who was going to Pembroke, I took it to him to save the postage. And as he had lived some time in London, and was a sprightly young man, the enemy suggested that I was some years younger than he, and at present as likely to live. I therefore thought, Why should not I enjoy the pleasures of life a little longer as well as others, especially as I have no desire to be wicked? Thus the subtle adversary reasoned with me, while my foolish heart first listened, and then yielded to the temptation. I have often since regretted this fall more than all the rest; because it had not

[1] Sunday, Aug. 30. (See Wesley's *Journal* for that date.)

only all the aggravations of the others, but blasted the firstfruits of Mr. Wesley's labour, which made such a promising appearance on my heart and mind.

In August, 1768, Lady Huntingdon opened her school at Trevecca. Among the scholars there was a Mr. Shipman, one of those expelled from Oxford the year before. Under the second sermon he preached in Brecon I was again convinced of my wretched condition, and resolved once more to turn to God. I was so deeply affected that I thought all in the house must have felt the same impressions; and indeed many did. Glory be to God, I have been enabled to hold on my way ever since! The Sunday following I heard Mr. Howell Harris, when the word sunk into my heart. I then began to mourn for all my sins, and to seek the pardon of them through the blood of Jesus. I would also gladly have joined the society; but as no one asked me, I was afraid to ask them, because I had no acquaintance with any of them, and because I thought I was not fit to be among them; being much afraid I should fall again, and bring a scandal upon them. Indeed, I was afraid they would not receive me, and seemed to dread a refusal worse than death.

About a month before Christmas I had a strong desire to receive the sacrament; yet I trembled at the thought, lest I should eat and drink my own damnation.

As I wanted a new Common Prayer-Book, the bookseller persuaded me to buy one with a

Companion to the Altar in it : I took his advice. When I went home I read it, and the Lord so blessed it to my soul that all my scruples were removed. Accordingly, I resolved to go to the Lord's table on Christmas day. When the time came, I was overwhelmed with dread, and went trembling to the altar ; but when the minister gave me the blessed elements, God gave me the sweet drawings of His love. This did not abide long ; but while it did, I thought I was in heaven ! Surely I have reason to love the Church of England ; and, blessed be God, I have done so ever since ; for I felt then (as I have done many times since), that the Lord can and doth give His blessing to all who come to His table trusting in Him, though neither minister nor congregation are truly spiritual people.

That evening Mr. Cheek preached in the Methodist meeting, and desired any who chose it to stay at the meeting of the society. I gladly accepted of the invitation. In his exhortation he said, ' If any desired to join the society, they might speak to some one who knew them, and they should be admitted on trial.' As I longed to be joined to them, I spoke to Mr. J., and was that night admitted. I was soon known by all the society ; and some of them who were Calvinists took great pains to confirm me in their opinions : but I never could hold them altogether after I was convinced of sin, and had tasted in a small degree that the Lord had pity upon me ; for I concluded that if He was willing to save wretched, sinful me, He could find no one more

unworthy of His mercy among the whole human race.

One evening as I was alone in a bower in my uncle's garden, the enemy wanted to trouble my mind about those things. On this I fell on my knees, and begged of the Lord to teach me what was right on either side, if it was necessary for me to know them. Immediately I felt those words impressed on my mind, 'Be determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.' I cried out, 'Lord, that is enough'; and resolved that I would not give way to any such thoughts till I had found the Lord in pardoning love. Upon this I found more earnestness in seeking Him than ever, and often mourned in bitterness of spirit because I did not mourn enough.

One morning while I was hearing the word, I felt power to believe that my sins were forgiven; but in a moment I was robbed of the blessing, by the enemy's suggesting that I had not repented enough. Some time after, I rose (as usual) to read and pray; and as I was reading a sermon upon faith, the Lord again gave me power, not only to believe, but also to hold fast my confidence. Oh what a heaven did then spring up in my soul! I felt that the kingdom of heaven is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost! My heart was filled with joy, and peace, and grateful love: I walked all that day in the light of God's countenance. At night that dear servant of God, Mr. Watkins, of Llanusk, met the class; and oh how did his soul rejoice, when he heard that another was born into his Father's kingdom!

He conceived a great affection for me that night, which he retained to the day of his death. My life was then truly comfortable. I could bless God every hour that ever I was born.

In the latter end of that summer I was appointed a class-leader. I entered upon this office with great reluctance; yea, with fear and trembling: however, the Lord supported me. The society increased that winter, so that in the spring I was obliged to take charge of another class. Some time after there were prayer-meetings established, and the preachers desired me to take the conducting of them upon me.

After they had been continued some time, I found it impressed upon my mind to give a few words of exhortation; and we went on happily for some time. But in August, 1770, Lady Huntingdon proposed to Mr. B[old][1] that the chapel in Brecon should be reserved for the use of her scholars, and whomsoever her ladyship should appoint; by which means Mr. Wesley's preachers were to be entirely excluded. But Mr. B[old] refused to comply, and soon after settled the chapel on the Methodists. I then dreaded what soon followed; namely, a separation of the society. As I was strongly attached to some of the scholars, it was like death to me to be separated from them; but I saw the unreasonableness of their proceedings. Lady Huntingdon had not given a shilling towards building the chapel, but Mr. Wesley had subscribed eighty pounds. I considered farther that the society had been raised

[1] Hugh Bold. See Young's *Methodism in Wales.*

and kept up for near twenty years by means of Mr. Wesley and his preachers. Her ladyship said to several of us who waited upon her on the occasion, that she had no objection to Mr. Wesley; that she loved and honoured him; that her sole reason for separating was a desire to see what good her students would do separate from everybody else. Soon after her ladyship sent one of the students to town to preach in another place, at the same time our preacher was in the chapel. This distressed me much. I had the cause of God much at heart, and I feared such proceedings would injure it greatly; but God overruled all for good.

I never till now felt what may be called the fiery darts of the devil. He tempted me several times in one night to drown myself; and I had many other horrid temptations. But God provided me a friend in the time of adversity. Robert Phillips lived in the same house with me, and was witness to all my distresses. He was an exceedingly pious as well as sensible young man. When he saw me in deep distress, and undetermined which side to take, he laboured with all his might to compose my mind; which he happily accomplished; and when that was done, my attachment to Mr. Wesley, the justice of his cause, and my being now almost clear in his sentiments, soon determined me to stay where God had called me: on this I soon got the better of my uneasiness, and my former tranquillity revived.

I have since thought that the Lord permitted me to feel more upon this occasion than any one

else, to prepare me for what He intended concerning me.

A few months after, Robert Phillips urged me very fervently to begin to preach. I was much affected when he spoke to me on that head. But when he asked me if I ever felt any inclination or disposition of mind towards it, I could not say but I had; yet I could not say assuredly that it was from God: therefore, I always suppressed the thoughts. Soon after, one of the preachers was taken ill, and I went to Llanusk to desire Mr. Watkins to go and preach for him at Llangene. But as Mr. Watkins was ill also, he desired me to go. But I told him I durst not, till I was sure I was called of God.

The next week, brother Phillips collected together some of the most sensible and pious of our society, and one Watkin Watkins (a gracious young man), of Lady Huntingdon's society. We continued in prayer till near midnight; and before we parted, all present with one consent declared they believed God had called me to preach the gospel, and urged me at last to make a trial. I was still very timorous, and must own I had a dislike to being a Methodist preacher, knowing that he has a larger portion of reproach than others. Yet this was not the principal reason of my reluctance; but the very great importance of the work. But as I durst not be inattentive to the persuasion of my friends, and to what I felt in my own heart when most happy, I consented to make a trial, and accordingly went to Llangene. And though I was not so

happy as usual in my own mind (being much agitated), yet the power of the Lord was present. He gave me utterance, and many were comforted greatly. But this did not satisfy me. For as there were none awakened nor justified that I knew of, I resolved as I went home, that I would go no more. Indeed, I was very glad that the trial was over, and that I had now, as I thought, full proof that I was not called, and that I should no more be troubled with such thoughts. But God forgave me this rash resolution, and my reluctance to take up the cross. When I went home, all my friends were still of the same opinion, that I should go on. Mr. Watkins went to the same place the following Sunday, and gave out that I should be there on that day week. I went with great reluctance; but just before the time of preaching I poured out my soul before the Lord in prayer, entreating Him to give me a token of His will in blessing my endeavours, if He approved of my proceedings. I prayed in faith, and the Lord heard me. My own soul was overwhelmed with divine love, and many were filled with the presence of the Lord, and some with godly sorrow. From that time I have been kept from having many doubts respecting my call to preach the gospel.

The following spring and summer I exercised my small talents principally in the neighbourhood where I began. And at the end of the year both Mr. Dempster and Mr. Rodda advised me to give myself up entirely to the work at the ensuing Conference; but as I much doubted my

abilities for a travelling preacher, and thought I should be useful in that neighbourhood as a local preacher, I declined it. After Conference I had work enough; for there was one preacher less than the year before appointed for the circuit, and I was called to supply the vacant Sundays at Brecon and the Hay.

Mr. Fletcher's *First Check* came out about this time. I read it with attention and prayer, and all that followed as they came out; and I bless God I ever saw them, for I have had no doubt of the truth ever since.

Several of the preachers every year advised me to travel; but as I was useful where I was, I could not think of leaving that town till God had raised one up to supply my place as a local preacher, especially as I knew the circuit was not able to support another travelling preacher.

The summer following, I lost a good friend, Mr. Howell Harris. He had often given me good advice. I went to see him about nine days before he died. I shall never forget his parting words to me and another young preacher: 'My dear young men,' said he, 'wherever you are, take care to maintain that the only reason why all are not saved is that which the Saviour hath given, "They will not come unto Me that they may have life."' The next winter I lost another great friend, the dearest to me of any man living, Mr. Watkins, of Llanusk. He had been a zealous preacher for twenty years, and enjoyed the love of God uninterruptedly for four-and-twenty years. He had taken great pains with

me from our first acquaintance. When I took my last farewell of him, he said, 'O my dear John' (the tears flowing from his eyes), 'the enemy strives to have my life; but it is hid with Christ in God.' He died soon after in full triumph of faith. I may safely say that he did not leave his fellow behind him in all that country, for deep piety, Christian experience, zeal for God, and true benevolence. He feared not the face of any man, if he met him in defence of the cause of God; but I have seen him submit like a lamb when his own reputation has been shamefully traduced, though I knew he was as innocent as a new-born child of the things laid to his charge. Thus lived and thus died my dear friend; and as such I mourned for him. Oh that I may be found at his feet in the day of the Lord!

About this time Mr. Church began to preach. I then thought God was making my way clear to go into the work. But a thought struck me (and followed me for many days), that God had raised many preachers in England and America; but few, if any, in the West Indies. It was therefore strongly impressed on my mind that I ought to offer myself to go thither. Accordingly, I mentioned it to Mr. J. Brettell,[1] who said he would go with me if I was approved of. I then wrote to Mr. Wesley upon the subject; but he, not approving of it, advised me to go to Kingswood till Conference, and told me he would then appoint me a circuit. But my friends were loth to part with me; and, at that time, I was dubious

[1] John Brettell was stationed at Brecon in 1772-3.

of my call to travel in England, supposing there were plenty of travelling preachers there; and therefore I declined taking his advice respecting Kingswood, and waited to see if God would reveal His mind to me more fully between that and the Conference. And though I laid it before Him with great earnestness, I was rather in suspense till a few days before the Conference sat; when I came to a determination to write to him, and to desire him to decide it for me. Soon after the Conference I received a letter from him, informing me that he had appointed me to the Glamorganshire Circuit. I then prepared for my journey, and went off as soon as possible. At my first setting off the Lord gave me great encouragement; for the people were loving and kind, and Mr. Boon, my fellow labourer, watched over me in tender love. He saw my weakness and defects, and studied my improvement in all things.

The next year I was appointed to the Pembrokeshire Circuit. Mr. Bradburn was exceedingly kind to me; he took as much pains with me as if I had been his brother. That year we had some fruit of our labours, especially at Carmarthen; but we had many trials also. However, I can bless the time that I was appointed there, if it was only for the sake of being a year with Mr. Bradburn. Mr. Dixon was my other partner, whose steadiness and meekness were of great use to me.

The next year I was appointed for Glamorganshire again, to labour with plain, honest Mr. Ashman. We spent a happy year together. It

is remarkable that the two years I was in that circuit there was very little good or harm done among us. The congregations, in several places, were tolerably large and lively; but yet few were convinced or converted.

At the next Conference I was sent to Londonderry, to labour with Mr. Watkinson. We had many trying circumstances to encounter here; but we lived and acted in perfect harmony, and had some fruit of our labours, which made our trials much easier. That year the Lord was pleased to carry on a great work at Coleraine, which has continued ever since. Two clergymen of the Established Church, Mr. B[oyd] and another, whose name I have forgotten, were favourable to the cause, and kind to us.

While I was in this circuit, I received a circular letter respecting an African Mission. As soon as I read it, I felt a strong desire to offer myself to go; yet my nature shuddered at the thought of leaving father and mother, brothers and sisters, friends and country, but especially my dear brethren in Christ. I also dreaded the intense heat of the sun by day, and the damps of the night; which I had heard were in general fatal to a European constitution. In this deep distress I prayed to the Lord that He would give me direction and strength. The next morning I went to church, when one of the Psalms for the day was the one hundred and twenty-first. In reading it, I viewed it as an answer to my prayer. But when we came to the fifth verse, my soul was so overwhelmed with divine love that I

could no longer doubt of the will of God concerning me. As we read on, I resolved to offer myself to go, on which all my fear and dread vanished away.

I think I should not do justice to this narrative if I did not insert the fifth and following verses. 'The Lord Himself is thy keeper: the Lord is thy defence upon thy right hand; so that the sun shall not burn thee by day, neither the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; yea, it is He that shall keep thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth for evermore.' Having received this clear answer to my prayer, I hesitated no longer; but offered myself freely and fully, if approved of by my brethren in Conference. But they did not approve of the Mission itself, on account of the war[1]; so the matter was for that time laid aside.

I have often thought since that they were too cautious; and sometimes I have thought that because they would not give me up at all hazards to the Lord, He has shown them what He can do in my native country; for I have had two violent fevers since, and by the last have been rendered incapable of doing much for near two years. I know it was tenderness in my dear brethren; but I have always been of opinion that we ought to have gone; and if the Lord ever restores me to tolerable health, and it is judged right to send out a Mission into those dark regions, I hope I shall be as ready to go as ever.

[1] With the American Colonies.

While the matter was in suspense, I wrote to Mr. L., of Pembroke, to acquaint my parents of my intention. In a short time he wrote me word that when he told them, they said they had given me up to the Lord when I first set out to travel, and were determined never to recall me. This gave me great comfort; for, as they are tender, loving parents, it would have added much to my affliction if they had opposed my going.

The next year I was appointed for Ireland, to labour in the Lisburn Circuit. This was a year of great trouble; but I was enabled to bear it all for the sake of God and His cause.

In the month of February the ship *Lydia* (a letter of marque, of above three hundred tons burden, belonging to Messrs. Robinson and Chorley, of Liverpool) was wrecked near Sheepland, in the isle of Cale, when all the crew (except one man) perished. She was outward-bound, and richly laden with various kinds of English and Irish manufactures. We had several societies in that neighbourhood; and many of our people went with the rest of the country people to plunder the wreck, and others of them bought or received presents of the stolen goods.

Before I came to that end of the circuit I had to preach at a new place (Kilkeel) in the mountains of Mourn. At the time appointed there was so large a congregation assembled that the little house would not hold one quarter of them. And as they had never seen a Methodist preacher before, they urged me to come out. But I

objected, as it blew and rained very hard, and was also rather late in the night. To this they replied that I should be as well off as they, and better; for they would make me a tent on the lee-side of the house, with boat-sails. As I found they began to be clamorous, I put my cloak on, and went out immediately; for I saw they would be long in making the tent. Accordingly, I preached near an hour, while the people were as attentive as if they had been in a church. That night a work began which flourished for some time, and was in a good state when brother B. left the circuit the year following. How it has been since I do not know.

But preaching out of doors in the night, and in such weather, gave me a dreadful cold. In this state I went among our poor fallen people in the isle of Cale, and found that every society had, more or less, been partakers of the accursed thing, except that dear people in Strangford. I therefore found I had nothing to do but to get rid of them, and at the same time to preach repentance and restitution unto them. My preaching had the desired effect with many, who came with tears in their eyes, and proposed restitution as far as they were able. Nevertheless, I thought it my duty to put them out of the society for a season, as their crime was so glaring, and of so heinous a nature. I considered that repentance was all that we could require for the offence against God, and restitution was all we could insist on for the offence they had committed against their neighbour; but they could make no

satisfaction for the scandal they had brought on the people of God but by being publicly put out of the society, and kept out for a season. I accordingly, with an almost broken heart, read out sixty-three in Downpatrick on the Sunday evening; adding that those who would make restitution should be restored at a proper time; but those who would not, should be recorded in the general steward's book, with an account both of their crime and obstinacy.

This severity (as some called it) had in a great degree its desired effect. It entirely rolled away the reproach that would otherwise have stuck to the Methodists and prevented our usefulness in those parts. On our removing the preaching from the place where the depredations were committed, a creditable farmer took us in, where much larger congregations assembled, and where a good society was raised before the year was out.

All this time the cold I had taken at Kilkeel increased daily, for want of time to take something to remove it. I was also almost heartbroken for the great evil that was done; which both together threw me into a violent fever. But herein I experienced much of the tender dealings of God. I was seized with the fever in Lisburn, and in one of the tenderest families in Ireland, where the accommodations were every way suitable to my condition. Here I lay in a very dangerous way for three days. But my physician (Dr. Bell) was very attentive. The fourth day I was out of danger, and recovered so fast that I preached in a fortnight from the

beginning of my fever, and was on my circuit in three weeks.

This fever was a great blessing to my soul; for I felt the truth of those words, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted.' It was also good for my body, as it removed a consumptive habit which I had laboured under for fifteen years, inasmuch as I had as good health for above two years after, as ever I had in all my days.

After this, I and my fellow labourer went on comfortably the remaining part of the year, while the work of God prospered more than it had done before, in our time, in the isle of Cale. For many of the offenders were deeply humbled before God for the scandal they had brought upon His cause, repented heartily for the breach of His holy law, made all the restitution they could to the people they had injured, and therefore were admitted into the society again.

What was very remarkable, there were some who never belonged to us (only as hearers) that desired to make restitution with our people, being induced thereto by our preaching.

Some time after I wrote to Messrs. Robinson and Chorley the whole state of the case, and desired to know with whom I was to deposit what was restored. They wrote me a very polite and Christian letter, and directed me where to send the effects, and empowered me to allow the people salvage for their trouble (but this I never did, because they had stolen the goods); and congratulated me upon being connected with a people so open to conviction. I also heard that several

gentlemen in the neighbourhood remarked that the Methodist preachers had proved themselves honest men; and said if the ministers of every persuasion had acted as they did, most of the goods might have been saved. Thus we see our God can defeat Satan's boldest designs, by causing all to end in His glory.

I was next appointed to Belfast, where I continued till March, when Mr. Wesley was kind enough to remove me at my own request to Londonderry again. I shall ever feel gratitude for his great tenderness to me in that removal, and to Mr. Rutherford for changing with me so readily. But I stayed three weeks at Coleraine before I went to Derry, and found a blessed increase of the work of God; for it was at that time the best-disciplined and most lively society I ever saw before or since. And no wonder; for it had been blessed with two good men (Messrs. Rutherford and Moore), and indeed most of the society had drunk into their spirit.

From thence I removed to Derry, and was received by my old friends with much love. I continued there till about a month before Conference, when Mr. Wesley was pleased to direct me to go to Dublin with all speed, to supply Mr. Boardman's place, who was gone to England. Soon after I came, my uncle Miller (with whom I had lived thirteen years), being very ill, desired much to see me, and procured a letter to be sent to Mr. Wesley, requesting that he would send for me, that he might see me before he died. Mr. Wesley was so kind as to comply with his request,

and accordingly wrote to me to be in Bristol the Saturday before Conference.

At that Conference I was appointed for Brecon. When I came thither I found my uncle recovering, who rejoiced to see me, as did also all the family and my religious friends; yea, all my acquaintances in the town seemed glad to see me. But I was a good deal grieved all this year to see so little fruit of our labours; though, blessed be God, there was some.

In February I met with a great deliverance as I was going into Radnorshire. As I passed over the mountains beyond Pains Castle, it snowed very hard. When the snow ceased, a thick mist came on, and soon after a very dark night. In these circumstances I expected nothing but to perish before the morning; as the snow had filled up all the roads, and as I was afraid the fog would bewilder me. Going on, I soon lost my road, and found myself among a number of turf-pits. In this situation I looked up to God for direction. Presently I recollected that the wind was west when I came up the hill; and knowing that my course was near north, and that there was a valley lying east and west, about two miles to the northward, I resolved to shape my course by keeping the wind upon my left cheek. Being rather afraid lest the wind should change, I looked up and left that to God. As I could not see twice the length of my horse, I was in great danger of falling into the turf-pits. Nevertheless I went on, trusting in God, and was kept happy in my soul. Having travelled a long

time in the dark, I at last saw a star through the fog, and judged that the valley was near; and in a short time I found it to be the case, to my very great comfort, and, through the mercy of God, I entered it, and so got safe to B. Griffith's about half past seven o'clock.

The June following, Mr. R——, of Caersws, related a remarkable instance of the power of religion. About a week before that, there had been in that neighbourhood the most tremendous storm of thunder and lightning, hail and rain, that ever had been seen there by the oldest man living. Indeed I never before saw such horrid devastations in roads, hedges, fields, gardens, and houses, and hope never shall again till the general dissolution of all things. But, as it was then so well described in all the public papers, and repeated in most of the parish churches, in a brief for the poor sufferers, it must be well known to all people; and therefore I need not mention the particulars here. But the circumstance I am going to relate was this: Six or seven people belonging to Mr. Rowland's society were assembled together for prayer, in a house by the side of a river which falls into the Severn at Caersws. All of a sudden the river rose and overflowed all the banks. The house was built of timber, and was soon swept away, with all the people who were in it, except one young man who got upon the top of the chimney, which was of brick. The neighbours, seeing him in this situation, came to the water-side; but, having no boat in all the neighbourhood, they could yield him no relief.

Though there was nothing before him but certain death, for the waters kept rising very fast, yet he continued singing and shouting in Welsh, with all his might, *Glogoniant! Glogoniant!* that is, 'Glory,' till a large piece of timber (a wreck of a bridge that was carried off) struck against the building, and dashed it to pieces, on which he fell into the water, and followed his companions into a blessed eternity. But before he fell he told the people on the shore that all his companions went off praising God in like manner.

At our next Conference, in 1781, I was appointed for Lynn Circuit. This year I was exceedingly happy in my partner, Mr. Button, and promised myself a comfortable time; but the Lord knew what was best for me. For on October 10 I was seized with a violent bilious fever. It was eighteen days before I was deemed out of danger; during which time I was thrice thought to be dead by all who saw me, and was actually once deprived of all sensation for six minutes; but God restored me, and gave me much patience and a great sense of His love.

Sending for the minister of the parish, Mr. Crofts, he came; on which my soul was much refreshed. When I had an interval of ease, so that I could bear to sit up, I sent for him again to administer the Lord's Supper to me. Many of our friends attended, and we all felt the divine presence in that blessed ordinance. After this he came often to see me; and when I was able to sit up, he would stay some time with me, and often pressed me to send to the parsonage-house

for anything I desired. But though I never sent for anything, as I needed nothing, he often sent what he thought was proper for me. May God reward him for his kindness to one who was near four hundred miles from his father's house!

Here also I saw the wonderful goodness of God, in afflicting me in the most convenient place in all the circuit. For Mr. and Mrs. Parker spared no pains or expense in providing everything convenient for me; and Mr. and Mrs. Stead, at whose house I lay, devoted all their time unto me, and cheerfully ran the risk of catching the disorder by attending me all the day-time.

When I began to get better, and was able to converse, I spoke often to my doctor of the things of eternity. He was an elderly man, and of good report in the town. I had a particular love for him, on account of the great attendance he gave me, visiting me five times a day, though he was much employed among other patients. About the time he had done with me he was taken ill himself, and soon after died. His nurse, one of those who were with me, sent me word that she hoped my conversation and prayers were not lost upon him.

As soon as I was able I went to Lynn[1]; but,

[1] Atmore (*Memorial*, p. 340) gives a graphic description of an open-air service here, in which he took part with Mr. Prickard: 'At two o'clock I went with him into the market-place, where he attempted to preach to a huge multitude of souls, who were as "wild as the untaught Indian's brood." They procured a large quantity of eggs, which they bestowed plentifully upon us. Mr. Prickard bore all their insults with the meekness of a lamb, and continued his discourse till his voice could be heard no longer; he

having begun preaching too soon, I got a severe return of my disorder. I stayed there till Christmas, and found I could not recover in that bad air. I then wrote to Mr. Wesley, representing my situation in full, and the state of the circuit, which had suffered greatly on account of having but one travelling preacher. He kindly invited me to come to London without delay, if I was able; adding, 'Here you can have the best medical advice in the kingdom.' He then sent me money enough to bear my expenses, which was very seasonable, as I was run very low by a long doctor's bill, &c., which the circuit was not able to discharge.

When I was coming away, a gentleman of Lynn was so kind as to take me five-and-twenty miles in his own chaise, the day before the coach came in, to try if I could bear the journey, as well as to take off some of the fatigues of the first day. Accordingly, through the help of God, I arrived in London with very little difficulty. When I came to the Foundery, Mr. Wesley and all the family received me with the greatest tenderness. I indeed found it a house of mercy to me in my weak state. For Mr. and Mrs. Bradford, who had the management of the house, took the greatest care of me. In a few days, Mr. Wesley sent me to Dr. L[ettsome], who presently finding out my case, I recovered wonderfully under his

then gave over, and we walked through the midst of the mob to Brother Keed's. They followed us all the way, shouting like infernal spirits, and after we were in, they beset the house. But He who stilleth the raging of the sea, stilled the madness of the people, and they were permitted to proceed no further.'

hands. But about the latter end of February, the winter set in very severe, and gave me a violent relapse into the fever. I began to recover again in about three weeks, but a cough and feverish habit remained all the spring and summer.

In June Mr. Wesley sent Dr. C[oke] to Dublin, and some of our friends thought that such a journey would do me good. Accordingly we set off, and on our landing in Ireland I was rather better; and continued tolerably well all the time I was there, which was about three weeks. For two or three days after I returned to London, I could not discern whether the journey had done me good or harm, as I had been very sick at sea, and came from Liverpool to London without being in bed. But when the fatigue was over, it was visible to all who saw me that it had done me good; yet I was not so well as to be able to take a circuit. When I mentioned this to Mr. Wesley, he judged it best for me to continue in London, that I might be under his eye, as well as near Dr. L[ettsome].

Soon after Conference we began to meet the classes, which I found very fatiguing to my body. As soon as we had done this, we entered on a more laborious task; namely, visiting those in their own houses who had not met their classes the last quarter. Before we had quite gone through this business, I was again seized with a fever, and continued very ill for near three weeks; at the end of which I began to recover again. Before this I was above three months not

able to preach; but now the Lord so strengthened me that I could preach two sermons on the Sabbath, and one in the middle of the week, without the least hurt.

When I was at the worst, many of my friends, who lived a little way in the country, kindly invited me to visit them for the benefit of the air. I gladly accepted of their offers, and lived among them as much as I possibly could, varying the scene as I felt myself affected. This was the principal means of my recovery this time; for the doctors advised me to take but little medicine.

At present I am astonished at the infinite goodness of God in raising me up so many friends in my time of sickness. I receive it as a pledge of His love, and am enabled to believe that He will always provide for me. If I should be advised to remove to my native air, for the confirmation of my health, I have several open doors. Two gentlemen in particular, in two different counties, have lately given me pressing invitations to come and live with them as long as I find it needful. But as I am now able to do a little, I am inclined to stay in the circuit, if I can; but if it is judged better for me to remove into my native air, I am resigned.

During my last confinement I was wonderfully supported; for though the enemy tempted me sore at times, yet he gained no advantage over me. I was often tempted to murmur at my being obliged to drag on so heavily; but I was enabled to be resigned to the will of God, knowing that I was His prisoner.

I often thought with great comfort on what Mr. Charles Wesley said about a year ago: 'Young and healthy Christians are generally called to glorify God by being active in doing His will; but old and sick Christians in suffering it.' Lord, let me but glorify Thee, and choose Thou the manner! only give me strength, and I will bless Thy name.

I bless my kind Redeemer that He has given me full confidence that He will not remove me hence till I am made ready. And I am firmly persuaded that it is the privilege of all that are born of God to be saved from all sin, and to live in the full enjoyment of the love of God; and that this salvation is necessary in order to our entering into the kingdom of heaven. I hope He will soon accomplish this great work in me, that I may be wholly His, in heart and in life, in time and to all eternity.

JOHN PRICKARD.

MR. ATMORE says, 'It was not long before he (Mr. Prickard) was made a partaker of this hope, in the completest sense: and he soon finished his course with inexpressible joy.' His Obituary in the Conference of 1784 describes him as 'a man thoroughly devoted to God, and an eminent pattern of holiness.'

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